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ABSTRACT

Discipline is essential to quality education. A blueprint for classroom discipline is presented that is designed to restore discipline in the classroom. The plan calls for the participation and cooperation of parents, teachers, administrators, the school board, and the students. The plan is based on principles such as: (1) school administrators must take appropriate disciplinary action, including suspension or expulsion of disruptive students, so that other students will not be deprived of a quality education; and (2) parents are primarily responsible for instilling discipline in their children and should cooperate with school administrators and teachers in maintaining firm discipline. A question and answer format is used to explain the background for increased problems in school discipline and the actions that should be taken to improve the school environment. Suggested disciplinary actions differ for the elementary and high school levels. Over half of the publication consists of attachments, including articles from two magazines and one newspaper about discipline problems; a model for state legislation on school discipline policy; and a handbook, "Student Rights & Responsibilities with Staff Implementation Guidelines," from Montgomery County Public Schools, Rockville, Maryland. (MLF)

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ACTION KIT #3

A BLUEPRINT FOR CLASSROOM DISCIPLINE

AMERICAN EDUCATION COALITION
721 Second Street, N.E.
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(202) 546-0865

"We want to give them freedom, but instead we gave them license to act as they see fit, thus reducing freedom of all. . .It is encouraging that a great many people seem to grasp that to return to basic freedoms, we must return to respect for order and discipline."

Fred Hervey
Columnist

EA 017 289

AMERICAN★EDUCATION★COALITION

AN EDUCATION DECLARATION

We the undersigned hold these principles to be critical to the reform of education in America.

1. **Parents** have the primary, inalienable right to educate their own children according to their own religious, moral and cultural values; they delegate but do not abdicate that right to schools and teachers.

2. **Children** should receive a quality education. Parents and teachers should be mutually committed to provide that quality education.

3. **Teachers** are entrusted with the awesome responsibility of teaching future generations of Americans. Teachers need the support and cooperation of parents. A safe school environment is essential to the dignity and effectiveness of teachers. Superior teachers should be rewarded; incompetent teachers should be removed. The measure of a teacher's ability is not whether the teacher has paper credentials, but whether children are learning. Because teacher strikes cause irreparable harm to children, and because public school teachers are public employees, teacher disputes should be resolved by other means.

4. **Local Control** is the backbone of American public education. Large schools and large school districts are not conducive to education, community values, or parental influence, and therefore should be decentralized. Authority should be retained at the local level where schools as diversified as the needs of children in the community can be encouraged.

5. **Judicial Activism** interferes with sound educational policy. Courts must not substitute their judgment for others in educational matters that are primarily the concern and responsibility of parents, teachers, and school administrators.

6. **Discrimination** on the basis of race is wrong. Minorities have been most victimized by poor education and would benefit most from an improved educational system.

7. **Discipline** is essential to quality education. School administrators must take appropriate disciplinary action, including suspension or expulsion of disruptive students, in order to maintain an educational environment free of drugs, alcohol, violence or other harmful influences. Disruptive students must not be allowed to deprive their peers of a quality education. Parents, who are primarily responsible for instilling discipline in their children, should cooperate with school administrators and teachers in maintaining firm discipline.

8. **Reading,** writing, science, and mathematics are basic to a quality education. Students should be taught the traditions of Western culture as well as principles of self-government and patriotism. Students should be promoted only when they have mastered the basic requirements for promotion. "Social promotion" leads to functional illiteracy and otherwise harms the child.

9. **Controversial Issues** such as school prayer, sex education, values clarification, creation science, busing, and textbook selection can be resolved only when parents are directly involved in the decisions on these issues.

10. **Parental Choice** of public or private education should be available to all, not just the wealthy. To mitigate the unfair financial burden that parents are required to bear if they send their children to private schools, tax deductions, credits, or vouchers should be provided.

YES please send me more information on The American Education Coalition

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Dear Parents:

Discipline is essential to a quality education, yet year after year, the Gallup Poll finds the lack of discipline in the public schools to be the number one problem. We believe that action must be taken now to restore discipline to the classroom and to the lives of our children.

Discipline begins in the home. As parents, you have the primary responsibility for instilling discipline in your children. How you require your children to behave at home will influence how they behave at school. Because children spend a significant number of their waking hours in the classroom, the discipline in the classroom must be consistent with yours. One must not undermine the other.

Children should be self-disciplined, but we recognize that children lack the necessary maturity. Therefore, parents and teachers must teach children how to be disciplined. Discipline is learned. Rules of behavior must be established and enforced. In that process, children must be taught to respect authority, be responsible, trustworthy, honest, courageous and charitable.

Believing that children will learn to be self-disciplined only with the cooperative help of parents, teachers and administrators, this action kit was written.

We're looking forward to your input. Tell us how you have gotten discipline into your local schools. Write me at 721 2nd Street, N.E. Washington, DC 20002.

Marcella Donovan
Director, AEC

TOP OFFENSES IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

1940

1. Talking
2. Chewing gum
3. Making noise
4. Running in the halls
5. Getting out of turn in line
6. Wearing improper clothing
7. Not putting paper in wastebaskets.

1982

1. Rape
2. Robbery
3. Assault
4. Burglary
5. Arson
6. Bombings
7. Murder
8. Suicide
9. Absenteeism
10. Vandalism
11. Extortion
12. Drug abuse
13. Alcohol abuse
14. Gang warfare
15. Pregnancies
16. Abortions
17. Venereal disease

Quoted from Gabler's Educational Research Newsletter, November 1982

PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

Q. What do you mean by a "blueprint for classroom discipline?"
A. A carefully designed plan for restoring discipline in the classroom. Our plan calls for the participation and cooperation of parents, teachers, administrators, the school board and the students. This plan is based on the philosophy that discipline in the classroom is essential to a quality education.

Q. Does everyone agree on what discipline is and how you achieve it?
A. No. This is one of the main reasons why the discipline is so bad in the schools.

Q. What do you mean?
A. In general, teachers and parents take one of two philosophical approaches to discipline; a traditional approach or a permissive approach. It is unfortunate, that in the last 20-30 years, teachers and administrators have adhered to a permissive approach to discipline to the exclusion of the traditional.

The thrust of a permissive approach is to allow the child to develop on his own. Parents and teachers are simply to assist the child in developing his or her energies and talents without defining limits, enforcing rules or attempting to control the child's behavior.

Q. Well, what is the traditional approach to disciplining children?
A. The traditional approach begins with the parents as the primary authority figures. Firm rules and strict control must be established and enforced in the home and the school. The guidelines set for disciplinary action in the schools should reflect the parents' standards. This approach emphasizes teacher control of the students' behavior. Teachers must demand discipline and they must be supported by the administrators and the schoolboard.

Traditionalists want children to be self-disciplined, but recognize that they lack the necessary maturity; therefore, parents and teachers must set examples. Teachers and parents must establish rules and hold children accountable for their behavior until they have matured and are in fact self-disciplined.

The traditional approach is consistent with the nature of the child. Children find security in defined limits. Children, whether they know it or not, want discipline.

Q. So, your "blueprint" is based on the traditional philosophical approach to disciplining children?
A. Yes. In order to improve the quality of our public schools and the quality of life of our young people we must require students to obey rules and guidelines adopted by teachers and parents. Students must be taught to respect authority. Students must be taught to respect the right of their fellow students to an education free from disruptions, violence, drugs, etc. We must teach students to be honest, charitable, trustworthy, courageous and hardworking. Remember, discipline must be learned and learned for a lifetime not just 9 months.

Q. Is the traditional approach really the most effective?
A. Let me give you an example. At Weidenborn Junior High in Dayton, Ohio, the principal, teachers and parents approved a school-wide code of conduct. (It should be noted that Weidenborn was never in any danger of becoming an inner city "battlefield", but disruptive students were depriving their classmates of a quality education and draining the teachers of their energy.)

This code spelled out the guidelines for good behavior and prescribed responsibilities for teachers who would be enforcing the rules and setting punishments for students who violated the rules.

Five basic principles made up the core of the code. Students were requried to follow directions and ask permission to use school property, be courteous, be prepared for class and be in their seats at the start of each class period.

The enforcement of these rules worked as follows: after two violations the teacher would contact the parent of the student and after three violations the administration would take over. At this point the student might be suspended, required to attend Saturday classes, or be sent to the in-house suspension center that, by the way, came to be known by the students as the "jail". No talking allowed in the "jail". No sleeping was allowed. The students were required to work on assignments sent in by the teachers.

The teachers, administrators and students agreed that consistency and follow-through made the rules work. The standard of discipline did not "depend on the mood of the day." Those at Weidenborn attributed the 28% decline in suspensions to enforcement of the school-wide code of discipline. (Newsweek, May 4, 1981)

Furthermore, this story is consistent with the Violent Schools-Safe Schools study (see next page) in which teachers and students said the most effective way to improve discipline in the schools would be to enforce standards and rules. These two groups believed there was a direct nexus between the laxness in the enforcement of rules and the violence in the schools.

Remember, children want discipline. Students want a well-run classroom.

Q. Are there any common characteristics in well-disciplined schools?
A. A recent study was done by the Phi Delta Kappan Commission on Discipline. Some of the characteristics of well-disciplined schools identified by the commission are:

- a total school environment that is conducive to good discipline rather than isolated practices to deal with discipline problems
- the principal's leadership is essential
- teachers handle all or most of the routine discipline problems themselves
- strong ties with parents and with community agencies
- teamwork on the part of principals and teachers

PART TWO: BACKGROUND

Q. The Gallup Polls, year after year, find that the public views discipline as the most serious problem in the schools today. How serious is the problem?

A. Let me characterize the problem for you. Disruption in the classroom can be anything from tardiness, loud outbursts and abusive language to assaults and robbery and including drug abuse, absenteeism, truancy and fighting. Teachers are being assaulted. Students are not coming to schools for fear of being harrassed or hurt. Students are afraid to use bathrooms in their schools. Students and teachers are having their personal possessions stolen. School property is being destroyed. (See ATTACHMENT A for stories that will give you the flavor of the problem.)

Q. Is this problem national in scope?

A. Yes. The National Institute of Education released a report in 1978 entitled Violent Schools-Safe Schools which made it clear that the discipline problem was national in scope. A few generalizations can be made based on the report, namely, the urban schools suffer from more severe discipline problems than the suburban or rural schools. Generally, the junior high schools are worse than elementary or senior highs because they are full of adolescents at their worst.

Q. I am sure disciplining children has always been difficult for parents and teachers. Why does it seem to be more difficult now?

A. There are a number of recent trends that have caused the increase in violence and lack of discipline in schools.

First, schools today are larger than they once were and consequently they are bureaucracies. There may be some advantages to this -- lower per capita cost of education, or teachers with specialized skills -- but, the disadvantages, while taking longer to manifest themselves, outweigh the benefits. Perhaps the biggest disadvantage is that the schools have become separated from the community. Teachers and administrators are no longer responding to the needs of the community, but are working according to their own agenda. The further removed the parents are from the schools the less control the teachers have over the behavior of the students.

It is interesting to note that evaluation of public schools by school and community sources was identified by the PDK Commission on Discipline as a characteristic of well-disciplined schools.

Another factor that must be considered is the compulsory attendance requirements. Keeping nearly all children in school until high school completion has adverse consequences. Bored and uninterested students cause discipline problems. (Remember, there are alternatives to regular schools -- perhaps such students would be interested in a technical trade school or would like to be a mechanic or electrician -- which can be done through an apprentice program.)

Q. If you had to name the most critical social trend giving rise to the discipline problems today, what would you name?

A. In answering that I would have to name two -- and they really go hand in hand --, the obsessive protection of "students' rights" in the recent years and the consequent undercutting of parental authority.

Q. What do you mean?

A. Parents have the primary authority and responsibility for educating their children and for instilling discipline in their children. Under the doctrine in loco parentis traditionally schools have been given the power to act towards students as if they were the parents.

In the past, the relationships between teachers, students and administrators were based on legitimate adult authority. Today, in the name of "students' rights", the courts have

undercut this authority and as a consequence the teachers have become mere custodians. Formerly, when students would misbehave, they were immediately punished. As a result, teacher assaults were a rarity, abusive language was stopped, and the classroom was more conducive to learning.

Today, however, a student's rights are protected by due process requirements. Teachers and administrators are required to observe due process procedures when disciplining students. Hearings are required. In some cases witnesses are called. Appeals are allowed. The result? Disruptive students get better protection against school officials and the rest of the class is deprived of its right to an education free from disruption.

An excellent example of the abuse of due process recently occured in Des Moines, Iowa. A hearing panel of the State Department of Public Instruction held that a rule prohibiting note-passing among students is unconstitutional because it violates their rights to free speech.

How can discipline ever be restored when state education bureaucracies do dumb things like this?

Q. Are you saying the teachers do not have enough authority?

A. Yes, basically. In the last 20-30 years the teachers' authority has been eroded. Teachers can no longer rely on the prestige of their position to control the class. According to Theodore Black, a "subculture" has evolved -- a subculture that is immune to deterrence, is entirely without a sense of guilt, and in fact has a contempt for the school system.

Paul Copperman, author of the Literary Hoax, has identified the breakdown of authority relations in education as the major cause of academic decline and the increase in discipline problems. According to Copperman, "virtually every significant educational problem of the past decade results from the abrogation or subversion of normal educational authority. The authority relationship bonding the teacher to student makes the educational process work."

At the same time it must be said that teachers themselves are also to blame. Through the work of the teachers' unions teachers now have the power behind them to reject authority -- that is, to refuse to enforce their authority on the students. This puts the principal in a bad position and has been a factor leading to the increase in discipline problems in the schools.

Principals must be given the authority to reprimand the teachers who will not discipline the students. The perception that individual teachers have of their own duty to discipline students and their willingness to do so should be taken into consideration when teachers are hired.

Q. Don't the teachers have recourse to the juvenile courts for help with serious discipline problems?

A. Well, not really. Again, this is another trend that has given rise to the discipline problems. Since 1967 when the Supreme Court handed down the Gault decision, there has been a reluctance on the part of the juvenile courts to send children "away" for anything that is not a crime if committed by an adult. Well, adults are not criminally charged for truancy, absenteeism, etc.; therefore, children cannot be disciplined for such offenses by the courts. What is worse, it is now hard to get juvenile courts to take any education/school related cases.

PART THREE: ACTION

Q. Isn't the ever increasing number of single parent households a significant factor in the increase of discipline problems in the schools?

A. One study by the Kettering Foundation and the National Association of Elementary School Principals found that "students living with one parent or with no natural parents create more than their share of discipline problems at both the elementary and the high school levels. Students from the one-parent and other catagory homes represent only 1/4 of the school population. Yet they are suspended twice as often in elementary grades as students living with two parents, and they comprise nearly 40% of the high school suspension cases." Phi Delta Kappan April 1980, pp. 537-540. (See Attachment B).

Q. Do you think studies like that are valid?

A. Probably, it is harder for a single parent who is working to maintain strong authority and discipline. This can be reflected in the child's behavior at school. Just because a child has only one parent, however, does not mean that that child will be a discipline problem. Most children of single parents do just fine. Strong discipline in the schools will help support all parents, with popular culture so decadent, all parents can benefit from supportive discipline.

Q. What about the media/TV? Do all the violent shows children watch have any connection to the discipline problems?

A. Common sense strongly suggests that the proliferation of crime and violence on TV has an impact on children and as a result an impact on their behavior in school.

Q. How has the education establishment contributed to the discipline problem in the schools?

A. There's an irony here. Teachers suffer most from lack of discipline, -- next to the children. Yet, the teachers' union is the strongest advocate of "reforms" that in fact cause discipline problems.

Q. For example?

A. For example, the "open classroom" is far more conducive to disruptive behavior than a traditional floorplan. Values clarification courses can undermine discipline and make behavior more of a problem in the schools. Yet the National Educational Association is a defender of all. Even more amazing, the NEA continues to endorse decriminalization of marijuana -- though how removing criminal penalties from pot will encourage better student behavior is anyone's guess.

Q. What about these other reforms I have heard about like busing to achieve integration or mainstreaming?

A. Unfortunately, these many "reforms" can cause discipline problems too. Let me explain. Steven Bailey, formerly a New York State Regent, did a study in 1970 entitled Disruption In Urban Public Secondary Schools in which he said disruption (in the classroom) is positively related to integration. He went on to say cross cultural clashes most frequently occur in moderate-income middle class schools into which are bused low income students. Also, discipline problems occur more frequently in schools where teachers are white and the majority of students are black.

Another example is mainstreaming. Having a physically handicapped student in a wheelchair is very different from having an autistic or emotionally disturbed child in the classroom. The emotionally disturbed child can significantly interfere with the education of the others.

Q. I have always thought that teachers strikes are not exemplary behavior for the students. Do teacher strikes have an impact on the discipline problems in the schools?

A. The very witholding of services is disruptive. But what is worse, is the example given to students -- that is, that disobeying laws and contracts is okay. Clearly this has an impact on how students behave and influences the respect they have for their teachers.

SECTION ONE: PARENTS

Q. As long as my children behave at home and stay out of trouble with the law, what should I care about how other kids misbehave at school?

A. Discipline is essential to a quality education. The students are the ones who lose out the most when discipline is not enforced. Not only do the students lose out in their education, but they also lose out in the long run. Discipline should be viewed as a means to an end -- the end being a quality life with a sense of purpose and direction.

Discipline is especially important in the schools with predominantly minority student bodies. Violence and disruption prevent these students from learning, and hence, from moving up in the world.

Q. What should the role of the parent be in bringing about a more effective standard of discipline in the schools?

A. First, and perhaps most importantly, enforce discipline in your home. Remember, the home is the perfect model for the school. If children respect you and obey rules at home they are more inclined to respect their teachers and follow the school rules. Remember, you, the parent, have the primary responsibility for instilling discipline in your child. Your efforts at home will have a significant impact at school.

Secondly, you are the most valuable resource your child's teacher has for understanding and dealing with your child. Therefore, when and if ever you should be called by your child's teacher, cooperate with the teacher to resolve the situation. Discipline should be a joint effort on the part of teachers and parents.

Q. How can I be sure the rules they are enforcing in the schools are ones that I agree with?

A. Generally, the district will have a discipline code. (See Attachment C.) The code is sometimes voted on by the school board. Therefore, you should attend the board meetings and voice your concerns, objections or approvals. Make sure the standards are based on a sound philosophy and are enforceable. If rules are adopted that you do not agree with, appeal.

Remember too, the board might be willing to adopt strict disciplinary policies, but their hands may be tied by state law. If you find out that this is the case in your district, get together with other parents who share your concern about the need for discipline and work with your legislators. (See Action Kit #4 -- How To Be An Effective Grassroots Lobbyist.)

Q. What if I think the rules are sound and enforceable, but they are not being enforced? It seems to me this would undermine my authority at home.

A. Start by contacting your child's teacher. Then get other parents who share your concerns and go to the principal. If neither of these avenues achieve results go to the superintendent and ultimately the school board, and ask for the policy to be enforced.

Also, watch out for classes your children are being taught which may undermine your authority. (p.3)

Q. Who is the key person in the school for school discipline?

A. The principal is pivotal. The principal is responsible for seeing that board policies and state mandates are implemented in the school. That means the principal must require teachers to enforce discipline. Discipline must be a daily habit of teachers. The corollary to this is that the principal must back-up the teachers when they are required to discipline a student.

Discipline can be achieved in a positive way also. For example, the principal might seek out and reward, on occasion the well-behaved students. This would not only give recognition to these students, but also set a good example for the disruptive students.

Q. How can I help the principal enforce strict standards of discipline?
A. Make your views known to him and to your child's teacher. Tell them you want your child disciplined and that discipline is essential to a quality education. Encourage them to call you if there's ever a problem with your child. If there is, don't be blindly defensive of your child -- realize that all kids have mischief in them -- it's no reflection on you that your child misbehaves once. But if your child is guilty, support the teacher and school in their discipline.

Q. Is there anything I can do in the school to help the overall effort?
A. Yes. Make your services available to the school. Volunteer your services as a hall monitor, parking lot patrol or playground monitor. The presence of parents in the school will improve the discipline climate.

SECTION TWO: TEACHERS, PRINCIPALS, ADMINISTRATORS

Q. Are parent-teacher conferences effective?
A. Parent-teacher conferences are a good way for teachers to handle discipline problems before they get out of hand, if you get a call from your child's teacher, cooperate. You know your child best and can help the teacher. Remember, it is important for you to demonstrate to your child that you respect the teacher and the administrators. If the child knows you support the teacher that will make the teacher's job easier and maybe even eliminate the need for the conference in the first place.

Q. What about school counselors? Should I allow the teachers to send my child to a school counselor?
A. The school counselor is another resource for the teacher to utilize when he is dealing with misbehaving students and some states may require it. As long as you have been consulted and the counselor is enforcing board approved policy, a counselor may be of assistance.

Remember you have the right to be present during the session. If you have any doubts, assert that right because you don't want your parent-child relationship undermined.

Q. What other alternatives does the teacher have for disciplining students?
A. One possibility is detention -- that is, keep the child after school. This seems to be getting harder and harder when students have extracurricular activities and many teacher contracts allow teachers to leave right at dismissal time. However, it can be effective if teachers and parents cooperate in the effort. It is important that the student be required to do something during this time -- clean blackboards, mop floors, wash windows, xerox papers -- so that it's not regarded as a "goof-off" time.

Q. What do you think about suspension?
A. Today, suspension is not used as much as it should be! When it is used there is usually a maximum allowed -- for example 10 days -- which is not very effective because it limits the teacher.

An alternative would be to have unlimited suspension -- that is, whenever and as often as necessary. The student should be required to perform some sort of punishment, as with detention, so that he is made to feel the consequences of his act.

The benefit of unlimited suspension is that it gives the teacher an immediate and long term way of dealing with incorrigible students and still keeps the door open for the student to come back to school.

Q. What good does it do to turn the student away -- don't they just get into more trouble or, worse yet, think it is some type of reward?

A. First, it is possible to have in-house suspension centers. That is a place in the school where the disruptive students are sent. The rules in these in-house suspension centers should be strictly enforced -- no talking, and no sleeping. The students should be required to complete the assignments their teachers send in.

As to whether or not sending a student home is effective -- it comes down to the bottom line -- it is better to have the parents involved than to worry that students' won't come back.

Q. Is it easy for teachers to suspend students?

A. Not really and this is a point that needs attention. Given the protection of "student rights", students are entitled to a hearing before they are suspended. This makes suspension more difficult and delayed. (See Attachment G)

Q. What about expulsion?

A. Again, this is a process that requires a hearing/due process before the student can be expelled. While this is usually the last step in a long line of disciplining it should be open to the teacher, and great care should be taken so that expulsion is the appropriate action. There is a line of thought that expulsion should be used especially in the junior high.

Q. You are always saying "student rights" get in the way of disciplining. But can't the students be right sometimes and unjustly accused?

A. YES. You as a parent have a right to know why your child is being suspended or expelled. If it is unjust then by all means appeal it. However, if the teacher is correct you should support the decision.

Q. What are the alternatives to suspension and expulsion?

A. There can easily be lesser sanctions: however even those should be backed up with the possibility of suspension and expulsion.

One effective option might be to have a student work 14 hours every weekend at the school, painting, scrubbing and polishing. They could be supervised by volunteer parents or paid college students. (see p. 7) Since this interferes with a weekend, it would be painful indeed -- and therefore effective -- for an older student.

If the student refused to comply, the board could resort to expulsion.

Q. What about corporal punishment?

A. First of all, the decision as to whether or not the teachers should be allowed to use corporal punishment is a local question, not one that should be decided by federal lawmakers or judges. Especially in elementary and junior high schools, if it is the consensus of the local community, corporal punishment is quite appropriate. Only, four states, New Jersey, Maine, Massachusetts and Hawaii, have outlawed spanking. However, according to the president of the Association for Humanistic Education, Robert Blume, the U.S. is "the last big holdout" on spanking in schools. Blume views school spanking as a criminal offense and his group is working to outlaw corporal punishment in all the states.

Admittedly, there is the possibility that the teacher will abuse this form of discipline; however, teachers are answerable to their peers and to you the parents. Corporal punishment can be a teaching tool by which harmful behavior is inhibited. It will not teach children to hurt others.

Q. My concern is that we give too much power to the state in allowing teachers to use corporal punishment.
A. Again, this is a local decision. Perhaps rather than allowing corporal punishment a community might allow freer use of suspension.

Q. Does punishment really have an effect on one's behavior?
A. Yes, why else would a speeding ticket be effective in controlling traffic or why would a 6% penalty for late payment of taxes encourage people to pay on time?

Q. What would be the appropriate way to write up a law allowing for corporal punishment?
A. See Attachment D for model legislation.

Q. What do you think the role of the police should be in enforcing discipline on elementary and secondary school campuses?
A. First, it is important to encourage teachers and parents to deal with the discipline problems if possible without resorting to the police. However when it is necessary to call in the police -- and it seems this happens more frequently today -- you should support the teachers' and administrators' decision. Often it is the teachers' safety that is in question. When teachers fear for their safety they cannot be effective in the classroom. Remember, the school is part of the community-at-large, neither a protected haven nor a private dictatorship.

When discipline is so bad that teachers cannot teach both, students and teachers lose their commitment to education.

Q. What are a student's rights when the police are brought in?
A. When the police are involved the students should receive the same due process rights the police would give anyone else in a similar situation -- students have a constitutional right to due process, e.g. has the evidence been properly gathered?

In connection with this, students and school personnel should feel a duty to report any known criminal behavior (theft, drugs).

Q. How can teachers and administrators effectively maintain order and discipline -- especially when drugs are involved -- when the courts step in and give more weight to an individual student's right (to be free from unreasonable search and seizure) than to the obligation of the school to maintain order?
A. This is a problem that teachers and administrators face. Normally, the authorities must have a certain amount of evidence that criminal activity has occurred (probable cause) in order to search someone or someone's home. Because teachers and administrators are responsible for maintaining order and because they are dealing with children and young people, they should not be required to have as much evidence as the police in a normal search and seizure.

Q. What is your view on some of these fashionable alternatives to corporal punishment like the human potential movement, reality therapy, transactional analysis?
A. The philosophy behind these approaches is morally relativistic and generally not the way to go, if you are serious about returning to a high standard of behavior.

Q. What discipline approaches are being used today?
A. In-house suspension, alternative schools -- intensive care for problem students --behavior contracting, peer counseling, assertive discipline. (See Attachment E).

Q. What is behavior contracting?
A. Spelling out for the student what exact behavior is required of him and letting him know the consequences of misbehaving. The rules are usually signed by the teachers, parents and students.

Q. What is peer counseling?
A. Student volunteers are trained in human relations workshops and then make themselves available during lunch time. Generally, the problems dealt with are conflicts between students and students and teachers.

Q. What is assertive discipline?
A. Often times the root of the discipline problem lies with the teacher unable to control the class. Assertive discipline programs teach teachers to clearly and firmly assert their authority over the students without becoming hostile or indifferent to the students.

This approach has been criticized because some assertive teachers neglect to reinforce the good behavior in the class.

Q. What are alternative schools?
A. These schools are an alternative to expulsion or suspension. Generally they are more costly than in-house suspension centers, but all reports from cities where these schools actually exist are good. The schools offer counseling services and remedial academic programs.

The Anne Arundel Learning Center is an alternative school in Anne Arundel County, Maryland. It is an alternative to expulsion; therefore, a prerequisite for admission to the Learning Center is that the student be a candidate for expulsion in his home school. The Center's goal is to cure the student's discipline problem and get the student back into the home school as soon as possible. 7th, 8th and 9th graders attend. While at the Center the students continue in their basic studies (math, science, social studies, and languages.)

Q. Should the discipline programs in the schools be different for elementary and secondary school students?
A. YES.

SECTION THREE: ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

Q. How is elementary school different from secondary schools?
A. First, the elementary school teachers will be many children's first exposure to authority figures outside the home. The first teachers will shape the child's attitude towards teachers and authority figures the student will encounter in junior high and high school.

Q. Do these elementary school teachers receive special training in discipline when they are in college?
A. College programs vary from one school to the next; however, colleges should include this in their teacher education courses. State laws requiring a certain number of courses in discipline would ensure that these teachers did in fact receive the training.

(Note: one would have to be careful of state mandated courses based on the permissive approach to discipline rather than the traditional approach.)

Q. I have heard that many teachers quit after their first years of teaching specifically because of discipline problems. Is there something a teacher can do to ward off discipline problems from the beginning?

A. There are a number of things a teacher can do to ward off trouble. For example, make sure to have organized and well-planned lessons and be tough in the "honeymoon period" -- that is to say, in the first few months of school it is better to more strict and let up later on, rather than to try to be the students' "friend" from the very beginning.

Q. How can a teacher "be tough" in the beginning?

A. The teacher should know the school's policies, establish rules for his/her classroom, have a daily schedule/routine that the students expect, learn the students' names immediately, be firm and consistent in enforcing the rules, and above all make sure the punishment fits the behavior. (See Attachment C).

Q. What sort of discipline is appropriate for elementary school children? Is corporal punishment appropriate?

A. First, if the parents and community approve and authorize corporal punishment to be used in the school, it is an effective teaching tool by which harmful behavior is inhibited. Remember, this is a local decision and what may be appropriate in New York City might not be appropriate in Valley View, Texas. (see p. 8)

Q. Doesn't the use of corporal punishment teach children to hurt others?

A. No. Think of this example -- if a child touches a hot burner on a stove you can bet he will never do it again and he's not going to go out and get his little brother or sister to touch the burner. As far as teaching children to hurt others, the area of concern should be the 18,000 murders an average 16 year old sees (on the average) from just watching T.V.

Q. Potentially, couldn't an angry teacher seriously hurt a student?

A. Potentially, that is correct. However that teacher will be answerable to you the parents for one, his peers, and reprimand by the principal and the administrators, as well as the full weight of civil and criminal law. Angry students who seriously hurt teachers are protected more than held accountable.

Q. How can I find out if our school/community allows corporal punishment?

A. Look to the school district policy. If you don't agree with the policy, work with the teachers and board to change it. If you find corporal punishment lacking and you want it, work to add it. See Attachment D for model legislation.

Q. Should the teacher discipline the students in front of the class?

A. This is a decision that will have to be made on a case by case basis. The teacher should always remember not to embarrass the child -- be sensitive -- just as a parent would disciplining the child.

SECTION FOUR: HIGH SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

Q. What is the relationship between a good strong curriculum and the amount of discipline problems in the schools?

A. If students are forced to work on academically demanding projects and assignments there is little time left for fooling around. This is a perfect example of how the recommendations of the National Commission on Excellence in Education would

improve not only the overall quality of the schools but will improve the discipline in the schools.

According to Copperman:

> "Each individual has a unique energy economy which creates stress if violated. It is well known that if a person works too hard, his physical and psychological systems become exhausted. What is not widely known is what happens when an energy economy is violated in the direction of too little work.
>
> What frequently happens is that the individual's energy becomes destructive, manifesting itself in forms as varied as neurotic problems, physical illness and hostility. If a child does not learn how to work in his first 18 years, he will tend to have problems regulating his own energy of economy. If he has not learned to channel his own energy in socially productive ways, his adjustments to his own energy imbalance are likely to be self-destructive. Our country's mass of disaffected, confused and hostile young people is a stark witness to what happens when children do not learn how to work."

Moreover, the more the student is involved in school activities the less likely it is he will be a discipline problem. Student government, service clubs, etc., as well as being fun, give the student some responsibility and interest in making the school a good place to be. Encourage students to participate in these activities.

Q. But what about those students who can't handle the academically demanding subjects?
A. This is an important point. Because when students are unable to do the work they are more likely to start causing trouble in the class or distracting others. Therefore, it is important for the teacher to work with these students and work with their parents -- maybe some special assignment sent home would help the student with the class work.

Q. Are there extra-curricular activities at the junior and senior high level that have led to the decline in strict standards of discipline? If so, why are they allowed to exist?
A. Any of these social groups or recognized clubs that don't recognize the integral role of authority in civilization can have a detrimental effect on the students' behavior.

Examples of these types of groups are the Mumford Young Socialist Alliance and an anti-Vietnam War student club -- the Student Mobilization Committee which were both recognized by the school principals -- only because of a court order. To prohibit these groups from existing would be a violation of the students' 1st and 14th amendment rights.

It is ironic that organizations like Students for Voluntary Prayer and bible study groups have not been recognized by principals -- even with court orders -- because to do so would be a violation of the 1st amendment's Establishment Clause, mandating separation of church and state. (See Religion and the Constitution, A Reinterpretation by Peter J. Ferrara).

Q. What about corporal punishment in junior and senior high?
A. In high school, perhaps a more effective punishment would be to manipulate the students' environment. For example, witholding privileges, grounding, or requiring the student to perform X number of hours (of the students own time) of work in service to the school.

Q. What do I do when the school wants to expell my child?
A. First of all, as a parent you have a right to an explanation why.

Q. What if they won't re-admit my child unless I agree to counseling?

A. (Refer to p. 7) If this is the case you should have the right to choose who the counselor is to be. While it will, on occasion, be important for you to seek outside help and even professional counseling -- you the parent -- should be making the choice of counselor.

Q. What if my child is expelled because he is a problem learner?

A. In some places, that is against the law. Where it happens you must seek remedial help for the child. Work with the teachers and administrators to come up with a solution. If you can't get an agreement at the school level, appeal. Special learning programs are probably available. Make sure that the student records distinguish between learning disability and behavioral problems.

Q. Sometimes the schools are right. I know my child is not perfect. What if my child's bad behavior gets him suspended?

A. The schools can be right and need your support when they are. If the child is rightfully expelled or suspended, make sure he continues to do school work at home. When the suspension is up, endeavor to make sure your child is better behaved afterwards. Remember -- discipline is based in love, so no matter what, don't stop loving your child.

SECTION 5: THE SCHOOLBOARD

Q. You have mentioned often that the schoolboard makes policies and generally has the final word on discipline appeals, etc. How important are they?

A. The school board does make policy. They make the rules that all schools in the district must comply with. See Attachment F for the account of a school district making stricter rules of discipline.

Q. What would make up a good discipline code?

A. First, the code should set forth rules for all to know and adhere to. A good code should have alternatives to the drastic remedies of expulsion and suspension. There are many moderate offenses that require discipline -- verbally attacking the teacher or using foul language -- that do not require suspension or expulsion. Board policies should grant the premise that children should be punished for violations of the code.

Board policies should be carefully worded and leave no room for unenforceable vagueness. If, for example, the term "reasonable sanctions" is used, the policy should elucidate what is meant by "reasonable sanctions." Take that a step further -- if the sanction is a "special counseling program" -- well, what does that mean? The policies, rules and sanctions must be specific and enforceable and they should be enforced.

ATTACHMENT A

SAMPLE CASES OF VIOLENCE AGAINST TEACHERS AND SCHOOL OFFICIALS

Theodore Black, in his book STRAIGHT TALK ABOUT AMERICAN EDUCATION, tells this story.

"Consider the case of Deby Salama. Mrs. Salama, a fourth-grade teacher in New York City, suffered severe injury when a ten-year-old student smashed a heavy chair across her back. The same boy had earlier bloodied another child's face with a screwdriver. Was the young offender suspended or otherwise disciplined? No. Said the school's principal: ". . .we did not think it would be beneficial to him."

"In a Manhattan junior high, a teacher reported that a fifteen-year-old had set up a drug display in his classroom, peddling drugs to other students. When the teacher challenged the boy, the latter pulled a knife and warned: "You fool with my business and I'll kill you." Presented with this situation, the school's principal was quoted as responding: "I don't wish to discuss the matter. I have important matters to deal with."

"In 1979, sixty suburban school districts on Long Island, New York, reimbursed teachers for vandalism of their cars and other property, usually committed in retaliation for disciplinary actions against students. Garden City, New York, allows payment of up to $200 for damages to a single car: a neighboring town pays up to $500 per year to a teacher for all types of damage. ". . . although teachers there claim that their annual losses through vandalism are at least four times that amount," according to Newsday, which reported in 1981 that the problem persisted in the area."

ATTACHMENT B

Reprinted from Phi Delta Kappan, April, 1980

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A Study of the School Needs of Children from One-Parent Families

by B. Frank Brown

Nearly half of U.S. children born in 1980 will live "a considerable time" with only one parent. This study shows that many of them will have special academic and behavior problems. What are the implications for education?

Last year, an Anglo-American conference was held in England to examine implications of the growing number of one-parent families upon schools in the two countries. A conference participant, E. Mavis Hetherington, a fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford, California, summed up the new problem confronting the schools in these words: "There is a greater probability of problems in school occurring with children from single-parent families. The achievement test scores and grades in school of children being reared in single-parent families tend to be lower than those of children living with two parents."

Family circumstances are changing so rapidly from the traditional two-parent situation to the phenomenon of a single-parent family head that the specter of lower performance by increasing numbers of students hovers over the schools. No one can say to what extent lower pupil performance *results* from parental separation — selection factors are obviously at work here — but we are now discovering that serious behavioral problems often characterize children of one-parent families.

In the U.S., little or no attention has yet been paid to the school needs of children from single-parent homes. In England, where one in every three marriages breaks down and second marriages are failing at an even higher rate, a family action group has urged the government to appoint a "minister for the family," with his own department to help restore the stability of family life and stem the tidal wave of divorces.

How many children live with a single parent in the U.S.? The number is formidable — and growing. The Bureau of the Census reports that more than 18% of the nation's schoolchildren are now living with a lone parent. The bureau projects that 48% of all children born in 1980 will live "a considerable time" with only one parent before they reach the age of 18. In actual numbers, we are talking about more than 12 million children, and that figure is growing at the rate of more than one million a year.

How long will children live with only one parent? The average time between divorce and remarriage is 3.2 years. To

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Figure 1. Elementary School Achievement, by Family Type

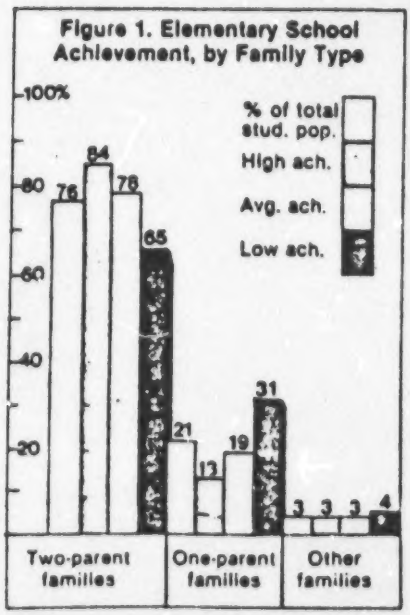
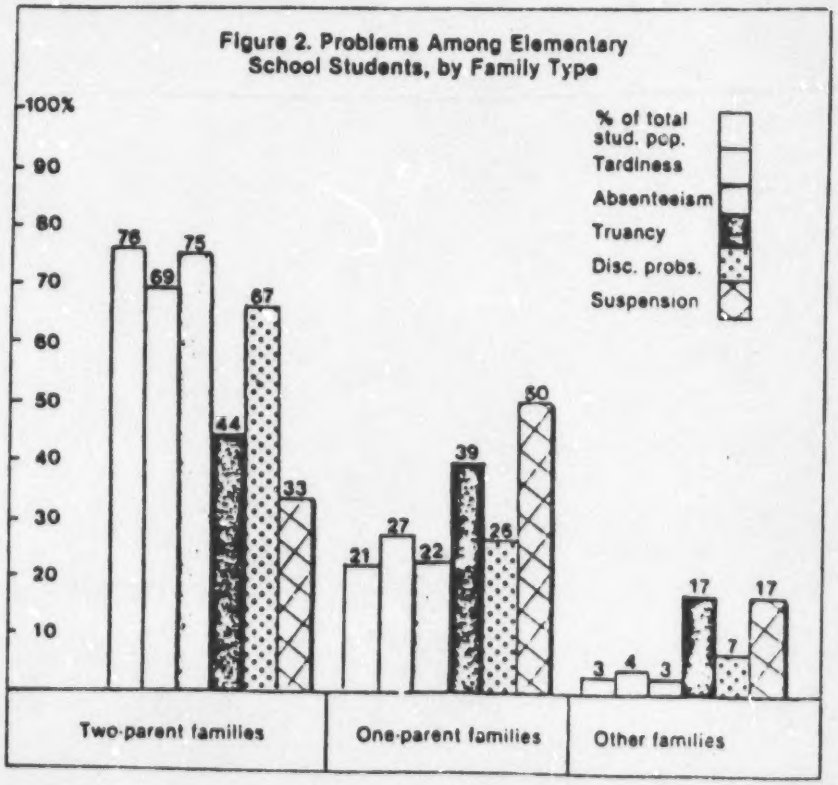


Figure 2. Problems Among Elementary School Students, by Family Type



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this time we must add the six to eight months that elapse between the time of separation and the actual divorce. The combination gives an estimated average time of four years in which the child resides with a lone parent.

Single-parent homes are created not only by divorce but by the death of spouses and the birth of children to unmarried mothers. The latter phenomenon is also growing at a staggering pace. There are now more unmarried mothers with children than widowed mothers. However, by far the greatest number of single-parent homes are a consequence of divorce.

In an effort to determine the impact on schools of this burgeoning new problem, the Kettering Foundation and the National Association of Elementary School Principals identified 18 items designed to measure school performance and initiated a study to compare the functioning of one-parent versus two-parent children in 26 schools.

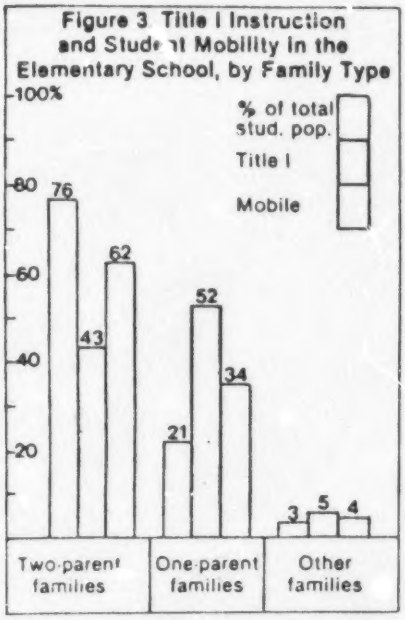
The initial research is best described as a search for clues as to how seriously children are affected after going through the trauma of seeing their family come apart. Even though an abundance of sociological research has been completed or is under way dealing with the family, parenting, and even single parents, this is the first large-scale study of behavioral differences in school of children from diminished families.

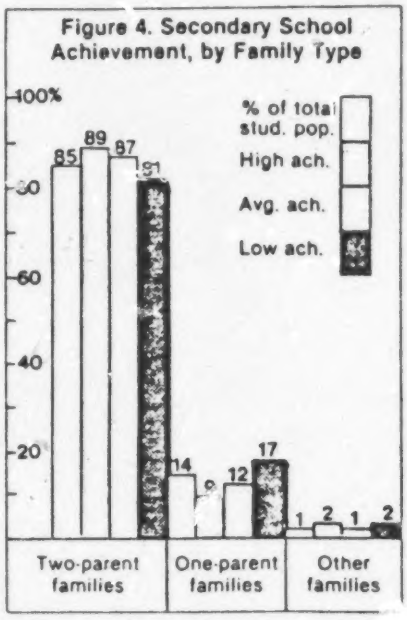
The accompanying statistical data, compiled from the study, highlight the findings of the research at the end of the first semester of the 1979-80 school year. These data are based upon reports from 15 schools with a total of 8,556 students. Included in this first analysis are results from 11 elementary schools in nine states with a total enrollment of 5,286 students and four high schools in three states with a total enrollment of 3,270.

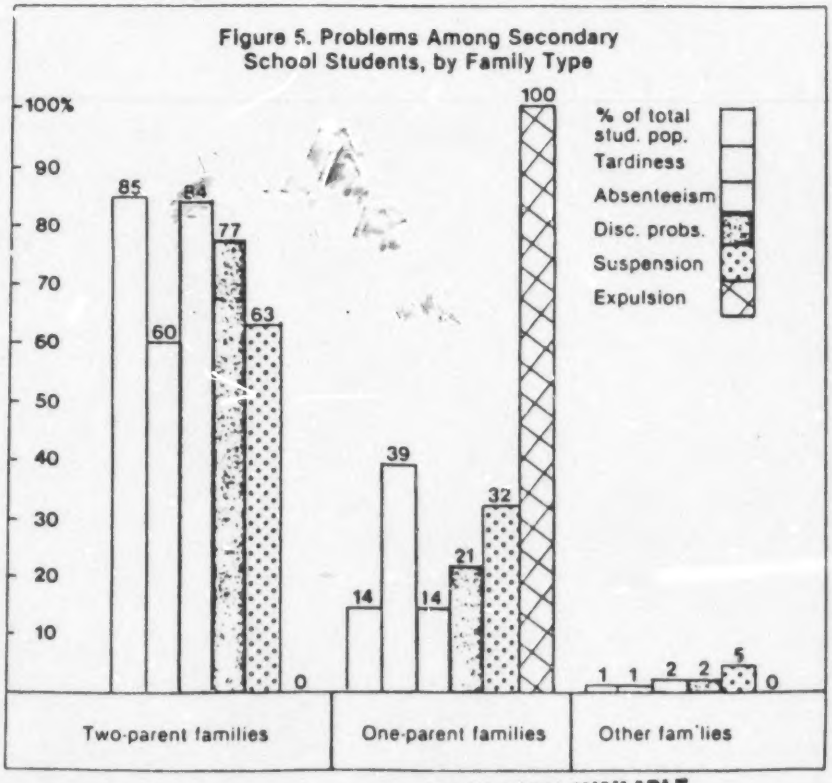
These data reflect differences in school achievement, tardiness, absenteeism, truancy, discipline problems, suspensions, expulsions, and dropouts, comparing children of two-parent families with children living with a single parent and students living with a relative or in a foster home. Degree of student mobility and Title I eligibility are other variables considered. (For the purposes of this study, a two-parent family was defined as any family unit in which the student is living with either both natural parents or one natural parent and a stepparent.)

Bar charts rather than tables are presented for easy identification of the differences in the various types of student/family relationships covered by the study. To understand the charts, the reader needs to know that all vertical bars are represented on a scale of zero to 100%. The unshaded bar represents the percentage of the total student population in the category named below the bar. The shaded bar reflects the percentage of the total student population in the function identified at the top of the chart.

In an effort to assess the influence of income on the differences between two-parent, one-parent, and other types of families, the study identified the numbers of children participating in free or reduced-price lunch programs. The functioning of children from low-income two-parent families was then compared with low-income single-parent families and others. Again a substantially higher proportion of high achievers was found to come from the two-parent family homes than from one-parent or other type family







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homes; an inordinate proportion of children from the one-parent families are also low achievers. In fact, the data for these low-income groups show substantially the same trends as are exhibited within the three family groups not participating in free or reduced-price lunch programs.

Thus early results of the study indicate that there are disproportionate numbers of children from one-parent families in both the high-achievement and low-achievement groups at the elementary level. While the low numbers in the high-achievement group are distressing, the high numbers in the low-achievement group are alarming. Differences among high school students are less dramatic in both the high- and low-achievement areas, but there is still a disproportionately high number of secondary school students from one-parent and other situations in the low-achievement group. Schools must pay particular attention to this phenomenon.

Results of the study also show disparate representations in the following areas:

Tardiness — The incidence of tardiness in the elementary school by students from one-parent homes is excessive when compared with the other two groups. At the high school level, the incidence of tardiness also is inordinately high (39%) for students in one-parent families.

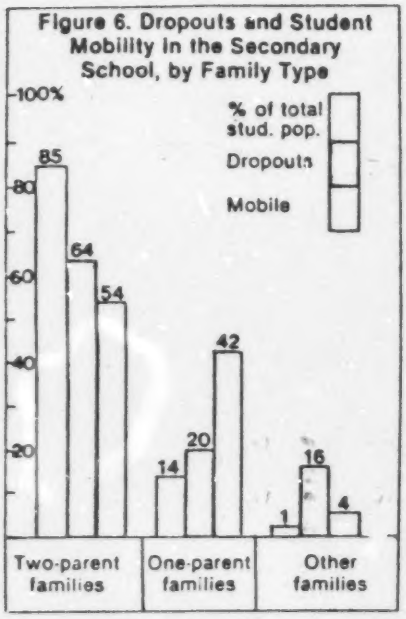
Discipline problems — Students living with one parent or with no natural parents create more than their share of discipline problems at both the elementary and the high school levels.

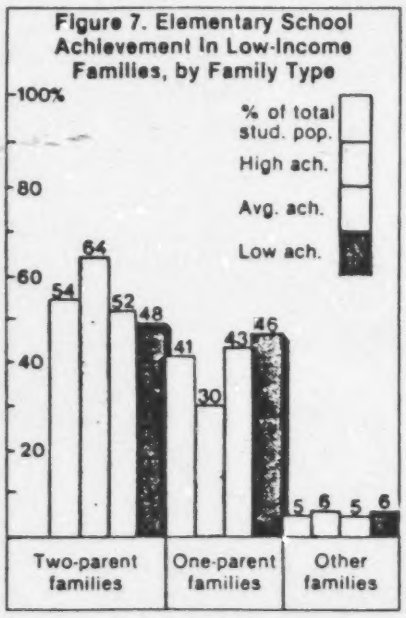
Suspensions — Students from the one-parent and other category homes represent only one-fourth of the school population. Yet they are suspended twice as often in the elementary grades as students living with two parents, and they comprise nearly 40% of the high school suspension cases.

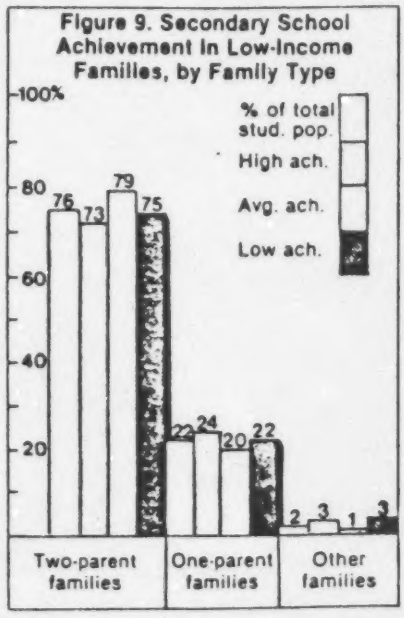
Student mobility — Students living with one parent or with no natural parents move from school to school more frequently than do children living with two parents. This is true at both the elementary and high school levels.

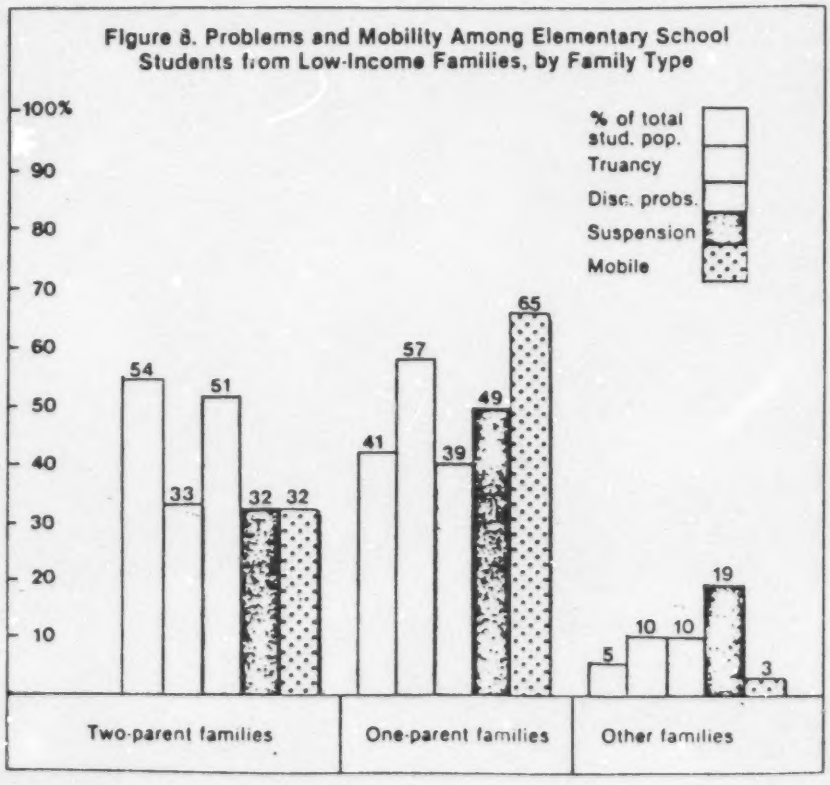
Truancy — Students from two-parent homes contribute less than half (44%) of the incidence of truancy in the elementary school, while students from one-parent homes and those living with no natural parents cause more than half (56%).

Title I — The percentage of one-parent and other category children in Title I programs in the elementary school is dispro-









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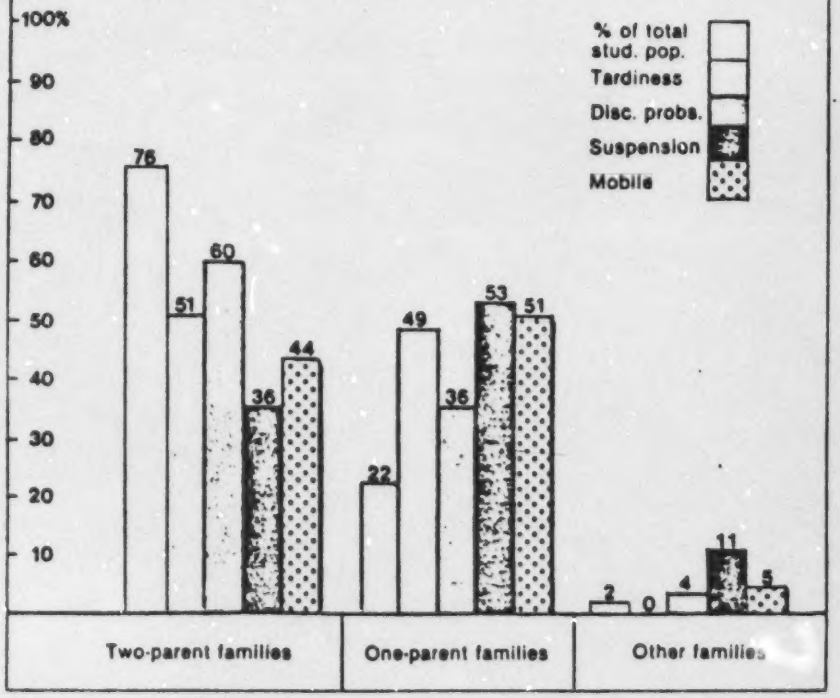
portionately high.

Expulsion — In this study, children at the secondary level from one-parent families were the *only* ones expelled.

Dropouts — Again, one-parent and other category secondary students comprise one-fourth of the student population and 40% of the total number of dropouts.

Comparison of groups of students in the three family types who are also in the low-income area reflects practically the same trends as the three family groups where income is not a consideration.

Figure 16. Problems and Mobility Among Secondary School Students from Low-Income Families, by Family Type



We shall compile final results and report on significant implications for elementary and secondary schools in a later phase of this study. Already, however, one can detect some obvious implications:

1. The rising number of single-parent families means that the nation's schools must face the problems of one-parent children in new and better ways.

2. Schools need to review and update student records and to identify children from one-parent homes in order that guidance counselors and teachers can become more sensitive and responsive to the needs of these children. On this point, the present study found that many schools identify one-parent children once but do not update their records during the child's entire school career, although family status may change frequently.

3. Schools must revise their calendars to make certain that working single parents have regular access to school personnel and activities after working hours.

4. School services and curriculum must undergo revision to better accommodate the newly identified needs of a growing number of children from one-parent families.

5. School systems, through their adult education programs, must assume a major leadership role in providing effective programs in the field of parenting. □

The Prevalence of Divorce Brings New Responsibilities to U.S. Teachers

Conventional wisdom has long suggested that the flexibility of youth will see children safely through the trauma of parental divorce. Today, with divorce a fact of life for 12 million U.S. youngsters, educators and others are beginning to take a closer look at this mental health problem for the young.

Newsweek ("The Children of Divorce," 11 February 1980) discusses some of the painful and damaging aspects of a family breakup for youngsters. These often include: a deep sense of loss, a feeling of vulnerability to forces beyond one's control, a conflict of loyalties, a life-style modified by financial straits, removal from familiar surroundings, custody battles, temporary neglect by troubled parents, jealousy toward parents' new sexual partners, problems with stepparents, and, occasionally, parental kidnapping.

Educators need to be aware of these problems and of children's typical responses, which differ by age. Preschoolers, for instance, tend to regress to more dependent behaviors. Between the ages of 2 and 4, many youngsters also vie with their same-sex parents for the attention of opposite-sex parents. Having sometimes wished one parent gone, they feel responsible and guilty when this actually occurs. For children aged 6 to 8, feelings of responsibility and guilt persist, often accompanied by fears of abandonment. Between the ages of 8 and 12, children are more likely to feel anger at the parent they believe to have caused the divorce. This anger is likely to show up in the classroom and on the playground. Teenagers, meanwhile, tend to feel torn in their loyalties.

There are sex differences, too. Boys are likely to vent their sadness by bullying peers, while girls cry. Many children, regardless of age or sex, also nurture an overwhelming desire to bring their parents back together again.

Adjustment to divorce can take a long time. Judith S. Wallerstein and Joan B. Kelly, in a study of 60 families five years after divorce (*Psychology Today*, January 1980), found 34% of the children resilient and thriving, 29% coping reasonably well, and 37% depressed and wistfully looking backward to the pre-divorce family. Parental attitudes seem to be the most important factor in youngsters' adjustment to divorce, these researchers found. Children who were able to maintain stable, loving relationships with both parents seemed to come through the experience with the fewest emotional scars.

Schools today are burdened by the need to cope with an array of social problems not directly related to educating the young. Divorce is one of them.* *Newsweek* reports that an estimated 45% of all children born in any given year will live in one-parent families at some time before they reach the age of 18. Recent research on the effects of divorce on children raises a serious question for educators: Can we ignore this problem and still carry out our primary task? — PBG

*See Isolina Ricci, "Divorce, Remarriage, and the Schools," *Phi Delta Kappan*, March 1979, pp. 509-11.

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ATTACHMENT C

MODEL DISCIPLINE CODE FOR SCHOOL BOARD ACTION

USUALLY PRINTED IN THE TEACHER'S MANUAL

DISCIPLINE

Discipline has been and will continue to be one of the most important elements of effective teaching and learning. While it is not to be equated with education, it represents an essential condition in the educative process. Discipline must not be conceived of as simply a police arrangement, but rather as an educational influence. Discipline, or a code of conduct should be seen as a presentation of a set of values to young people who are still trying to establish their own values as they progress toward maturity. It is in this spirit that the rules of good conduct and order exist here at _____.

THE TEACHER AND DISCIPLINE

It is important that the teacher give serious thought to the basic consideration regarding his position and the attitudes he should take toward his class and individuals in the class. The most fundamental requirement is that he have a genuine love for the students. If he has a hostile attitute toward them, even though this be only in his mind, his efforts to maintain an appearance of good will and friendliness will not deceive the perceptive minds of his students. Without love, authority can become an autocratic, self-regarding power whose purpose is to see that the one in authority is troubled to the least degree and given adequate respect.

A teacher, if he has to discipline, should be a mature, self-controlled person. Self-control includes patience, a never-ending patience.

A teacher must be reasonable and just, if he is to win the respect of his students. Injustice, playing favorites, or deceit discredit the teacher and nullify his influence. The teacher must respect his students and show them the respect they desearve as individual persons. Name-callling or any other actions which would insult the student are out of order.

Our school district's philosophy on teacher discipline is set down in the following six broad guidelines. Teachers and administrators employed with _____school district, are expected to apply them to their own classrooms and school environments.

1) DEFINE THE BOUNDARIES BEFORE THEY ARE ENFORCED.
The most important step in any disciplinary procedure is to establish reasonable expectations and boundaries in advance. It confuses children if they are not sure what is or isn't acceptable behavior. How can a child be held responsible for the rules and guidelines set down in his student handbook if he isn't held responsible for those rules consistently?

This procedure will eliminate the overwhelming sense of injustice a student feels when he is punished for his mistakes and blunders. If the school has a tardiness policy (in your seats when, not after, the bell rings), enforce it and do it consistently. Don't expect a student to understand why Mrs. Jones down the hall, doesn't mind if he comes straggling in five minutes late but you do. Not only is Mrs. Jones undermining you as a teacher or parent, she is breaking the pattern, the continuity of teaching the child self-discipline. If it's defined -- enforce it!

2) WHEN A STUDENT DEFIANTLY CHALLENGES YOU, RESPOND WITH CONFIDENT DECISIVENESS.
Nothing is more destructive to teacher authority than for a teacher to disintegrate during a confrontation. When you react with screaming tears, or other evidence of frustration, your student will begin seeing you in a different way -- a negative way. Instead of seeing you as a secure and confident leader, you become a spineless jellyfish unworthy of their respect.

Children will naturally always challenge and/or assault authority. When this happens, it is extremely important for the adult to win decisively and confidently. Once a child understands what is expected, he should then be held accountable for behaving accordingly.

3) DISTINGUISH BETWEEN WILLFUL DEFIANCE AND CHILDISH IRRESPONSIBILITY. A child should not be spanked, nor a teen be punished, for behavior that is not willfully defiant, as when an elementary child forgets to bring his pencil to class or a high school student tracks mud in to the hall. Especially in younger children, this behavior is somewhat typical -- be gentle as you teach him to do better. With older children (or persistant young ones) it may be appropriate to administer some well-defined consequences (He may have to clean up the mud or come early to clean the boards). The point is that childish irresponsibility is very different from willful defiance and should be handled more patiently.

4) REASSURE AND TEACH AFTER THE CONFRONTATION IS OVER.
After an episode of conflict during which the teacher has demonstrated his authority (particularly if it resulted in tears from the child), a younger child may want to be hugged or reassured. Don't be afraid to do this. Gently let him know why he was punished and how he can avoid the trouble next time. A similar thing can be done with an older child but without the physical encounter. A moment of communication like this helps to build respect and fondness.

5) AVOID IMPOSSIBLE DEMANDS FROM YOUR STUDENTS.
Be sure that what you ask of your students, they are capable of delivering. If a child is really not capable of academic success, he should never be chastised for failure to achieve it. This type of impossible demand puts the student in an unresolvable conflict: there is no way out. Not only will a disciplinary problem probably result but it could bring inevitable damage to human emotional apparatus.

6) BE PROFESSIONAL, KIND AND CONSISTENT.
A teacher/pupil relationship that is characterized by these qualities is most likely to be a healthy one conducive to learning, even though mistakes and errors on both parties' parts are inevitable.

TECHNIQUES OF DISCIPLINE

PREVENTIVE DISCIPLINE

It is far better to prevent discipline problems from happening than to have to correct them. There are some rules to follow which will help prevent discipline problems from arising:

1) The well-organized teacher prepares his class thoroughly, begins teaching immediately and does his best to make it interesting. There are not moments when the students are unoccupied. Unpredictable and arbitrary conduct by the teacher leads to many discipline problems.

2) The teacher must be a professional person. He should not argue with the students or use coarse language, nor lower himself to their level.

3) Students should be required to keep the same seats. Copies of the seating plan shall be left: (a) in the Assistant Principal's Office, (b) in the desk of the room used for class. If the seating is changed during the year, the list in the above locations should be revised.

4) Students should be required to take their places as soon as they enter the class and be in their seats when the tardy bell rings. They are not allowed to leave them without permission.

5) A class should not be left without supervision. If a teacher is not present, someone previously appointed by the teacher whose name will be given to the Principal shall report to the office and notify the Assistant Principal.

6) The teacher should be able to see all of his students all the time.

7) Materials which do not pertain to the lesson should not be allowed to remain on the students' desks.

8) If there is a disorder in class, stop the lesson until the students return to good order.

9) Begin and end the lesson on time.

THE LESSON

1) When using the blackboard, the teacher should not turn his back to the class.

2) The teacher should be conscious of his voice during the lesson. His tone should be moderate and clear. He might tape a lesson and play it back to evaluate his classroom technique.

3) The teacher should not lecture too much. Class participation should be encouraged.

4) Work demanded of students should not be too easy or too hard. Challenge the students to the level of their capability.

POLICY ON ASSIGNMENTS

All work submitted by the students should be done neatly in type or ink. When once it is insisted on, students turn in their work promptly and well done. It is not necessary that homework be assigned every night; on occasion, it would be well to give study assignments which merely supplement that day's class work.

So that they may be profitable, assignments should be:

1) Clear -- readily understood; it is best to write out assignments on the blackboard.

2) Motivated -- students should be able to see why the work is being given; "busy work" is frustrating and a hindrance to the learning process.

3) Creative -- help the student to apply class material to some phase of the subject not necessarily taught in class; reports, projects, thought questions are just a few suggestions.

4) Followed up -- students must realize that assignments are reviewed and later to be considered a part of their grade, particularly when there is a considerable creative effort on their part. It is a good practice to return corrected work promptly.

5) Timed -- to fit logically into the class presentation and also not require a disportionate amount of the student's leisure thereby detracting from study in other fields.

Classroom assignments should always coincide with teacher's lesson plans.

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

1) Attention is to be paid to ventilation, temperature, and lighting.

2) Insist on cleanliness and order in the classroom. Before dismissing a class, be sure floors are not littered and desks are in order.

3) Students should maintain a good posture at all times.

4) Students who do not adhere to dress code for the school shall be referred immediately to the Assistant Principal in charge of discipline.

CORRECTIONS

1) Frequent punishment makes it less effective.

2) Correction should be unobtrusive; it should not disturb the class.

3) Punishment should be just, not vengeful. The teacher must be careful not to act when angry or in the heat of emotion.

4) Correction, however, should be immediate.

5) Extremely long punitive exercises may interfere with a student's completion of his regular school work and should not be assigned nor should humiliating and bizarre assignments.

6) Students should be sent to the Office infrequently and only for serious reasons.

7) No teacher has the authority to suspend or drop a student from his class, much less from the school. Any special class arrangement with a student is to be discussed with the Administration, Parents and Guidance before being put into effect.

8) Corporal punishment is handled by administrators in central office.

CONCLUSIONS

1) The teacher should make sure that the students clearly understand what is expected of them.

2) At first, use reminders, punishment may follow for repeated offenders.

3) The goal of discipline is to help the student avoid the fault, not the punishment.

4) Praise students who do well.

5) Be a cheerful zealous teacher.

6) The teacher should not expect to meet antagonism and ill-will, but rather cooperation and good will.

7) Teachers must be available for extra help on a daily basis.

PENALTIES

Punishment for violators at _____ are private detentions, demerits, in-house suspensions, suspension and expulsion.

1) Private detention
2) Disciplinary Demerit
   a. Normally, difficulties which occur in the classroom are to be handled by the teacher, no homework, inattention, lack of materials, talking, etc., NOT BY DEMERIT. Demerits are not to be given for misconduct in the classroom without first consulting with the Assistant Principal in charge of discipline. Classroom discipline is primarily the responsibility of the classroom teacher.
   b. Repetition of some offenses should be followed by communication with parents by the teacher experiencing the difficulty. The Assistant Principal in charge of discipline should be notified that this communication has taken place.
   c. Teachers should feel free to find a solution to a discipline problem.

When a student receives a demerit the teacher signs the demerit notice and lists the reason for the demerit. One copy will be given to the student and the other two copies will be kept in the office.

SUSPENSION

Suspension is a serious penalty for a breach of school regulations. Three suspensions during the course of a school year makes a student liable to expulsion. Records are kept on students' suspensions.

ATTENDANCE AND TARDY POLICIES

ABSENCE

The teacher is to send the absentee notes from the students to the central office along with the daily attendance report in the envelope provided.

ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

1) Each teacher is responsible for taking attendance at the beginning of each class, according to the established seating plan. Names of absentees not on the absentee report are to be recorded on the period attendance list and sent to the Central Office at the beginning of the period.

2) NO STUDENT WHOSE NAME APPEARS ON THE ABSENTEE REPORT SHOULD BE ADMITTED TO CLASS WITH THE PROPER ADMIT SLIP. Do not accept verbal excuses.

3) No one is to be admitted to class with the proper admission slip.

4) Each teacher is to keep an up to date record of the students' attendance. This is to be done at each period. Erratic attendance patterns should be personally reported to the Assistant Principal in charge of discipline.

USE OF THE LAVATORY

Teachers are asked to use common sense when excusing students from class. As a rule, students are expected to go to the lavatory during free time, such as before class, at lunch

time, etc. To regularly excuse them from study periods is only to encourage their traveling in the corridors. During lunch periods, students in the cafeteria are to use the restrooms in the gym lobby.

PERMISSION TO LEAVE SCHOOL

If a student becomes ill during class, he should be given a clinic pass to go to the clinic. Both copies of the pass should be given to the nurse. If dismissal is deemed advisable, this will be handled by the nurse, and the parent must meet the student in the clinic or make other arrangments. Students who go to the clinic during one period and stay beyond the time limits of that period ought to report to the Center Office before going on to the next class. Whenever possible, the referring teacher will be notified if a student is sent home.

ATTACHMENT D

MODEL LEGISLATION

School Discipline Act

The security of students and school personnel and a congenial atmosphere for learning have suffered at public schools in many communities as the result of unchecked disorderly conduct on the part of some students. In some cities, schools have become armed camps because school personnel have been powerless to maintain discipline and order.

Many school boards would like to implement good conduct and discipline codes, along with sound rules and regulations to allow appropriate punishment at school of students who need stern adult authority. It is widely believed that such discipline within the school system itself, administered with the approval and cooperation of parents, is often preferable to expulsion from school or possible encounters by young offenders with the police or courts.

Corporal punishment of minor students at school, when handled in a proper and timely manner, could prevent much juvenile delinquency and possible later careers of crime by adults who did not receive the discipline they needed as youngsters at home and at school.[1]

The suggested School Discipline Act provides such authority for local school boards to implement rules and regulations governing the use of responsible corporal punishment in the public schools.

Suggested Legislation

(Title, enacting clause, etc.)

Section 1. [*Short title.*] This act may be cited as the School Discipline Act.

Section 2. [*Discipline of pupils.*] Every teacher is authorized to hold every pupil strictly accountable for any disorderly conduct in school or on the playground of the school, or on any school bus going to or returning from school, or during intermission or recess. Any teacher or school principal may use corporal punishment in a reasonable manner against any pupil for good cause in order to maintain discipline and order within the public schools. On or before [a certain date], each local school board shall adopt such rules and regulations as it deems necessary to implement and control any form of corporal punishment in the schools in its district.

Section 3. [*Severability clause.*]

Section 4. [*Repealer clause.*]

Section 5. [*Effective date.*]

[1]In addition to appropriate discipline, studies show that school disorder and juvenile delinquency would be substantially reduced if states lowered the mandatory school attendance age to 14 and gave a diploma on completion of 9th grade to those students who choose not to complete twelve grades. The studies show that "having to stay in school after learning has stopped is itself a cause of delinquency." A good analysis of this and other factors is Edward C. Banfield's "Schooling versus Education," *The Unheavenly City*, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1968), pp. 132-157.

(1977) SUGGESTED STATE LEGISLATION
AMERICAN LEGISLATIVE EXCHANGE COUNCIL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20002

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ATTACHMENT E

Reprinted from Better Homes and Gardens magazine

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EDUCATION

Dan Kaercher

In poll after poll, parents have consistently ranked discipline as their number one education concern. Yet many observers say the "discipline problem" is grossly exaggerated. To find out what's really happening, we contacted school officials throughout the U.S. The consensus: While classrooms may have been in chaos a decade ago, there's a new no-nonsense mood today. School officials, determined to stay on the right track, are following through with some effective new discipline programs. Here's a report.

During the turbulent Vietnam War era, "down with the establishment" and "up with student rights" were rallying cries in the schools. Now things are quieter.

"You just don't get as many students who are rebellious or hypercritical of adults or institutions now as you did then," says Scott Thomson, executive director of the National Association of Secondary School Principals.

"There seems to be a 'get-tough-on-kids' attitude nationally," adds John Kackley, psychologist for Project PASS in St. Petersburg, Florida. PASS stands for Positive Alternatives to Student Suspension, a model discipline program developed in St. Petersburg area schools over the past decade.

However, Kackley says, adults tend to forget that most students *want* discipline—a term he associates with personal responsibility for behavior, not simply punishment for misbehavior. "Kids want a well-run classroom. They don't want a sloppy, chaotic environment," Kackley says.

What discipline approaches are being used these days?

In-school suspension centers, alternative schools, behavior contracting, and peer counseling are a few of the new programs that are catching on across the country.

The new approaches to school discipline are succeeding best in quelling commonplace disruptions such as rowdiness, insolence, tardiness, and truancy. Infractions like assault and drug abuse still are considered matters for juvenile authorities.

These days school officials aim to keep the majority of disruptive pupils in school, rather than suspend them. Since many children today live in one-parent homes or ones where both parents work, sending a youngster home may backfire.

Some new discipline approaches also stress self-awareness—helping a student realize what he or she has done wrong, and the effects of the misbehavior.

Here's a closer look at some of the innovative new discipline techniques being used today.

In-school suspension centers: Keeping troublemakers off the streets

In-school suspension centers—also known as crisis classrooms, time-out rooms, and behavior modification centers—are the fastest growing new approach to handling problem students.

In recent years, the centers have appeared in hundreds of school districts—including St. Petersburg, Florida; Houston, Texas; Indianapolis, Indiana; Richmond, Virginia; Columbus, Ohio; Kansas City, Missouri.

Students are sent to the suspension centers for just one period, for a whole day, or for several days as an alternative to being suspended from school entirely.

The advantages: Others in the class aren't distracted from their work, and the troublemaker gets special counseling while keeping up with his or her studies.

In the Houston Independent School District, each of six school "regions" has from one to three single-classroom suspension centers, known locally as "student referral centers."

Houston teachers and ad-

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continued

Discipline

ministrators credit the referral centers with significantly reducing traditional out-of-school suspensions.

"The kids who were sent home usually just wandered around all day without supervision," says Ginger Harper, supervisor of a community youth services agency that manages the program with the school district.

Truancy and fighting are the most common offenses that bring students to the centers, which can accommodate up to 20 students each. Typically, a student is required to stay at a center three days.

While at the suspension centers, students must maintain silence and eat lunch alone. Pupils also are required to keep up with regular class assignments. Counseling services are available for youngsters with serious behavior problems.

Like other model programs, the Houston centers emphasize keeping parents informed and involved.

Rather than simply getting a note from the school, parents of youngsters who are referred to the centers are required to attend conferences with their children and school officials.

The Houston centers also offer voluntary counseling services to any student—suspended or not—who is having discipline problems and needs to talk to someone who can help.

In-school suspension centers also have had a dramatic impact on discipline procedures in High Point, North Carolina.

Two years ago, there were 300 traditional suspensions at High Point's Ferndale Junior High. Last year, after the introduction of an "ISS" (in-school suspension center), there were only 85, reports Ferndale principal Betty Thomas.

Alternative schools: intensive care for problem students

An even more intensive focus on the needs of problem students is provided at alternative schools that have appeared in communities like St. Petersburg and Daytona Beach, Florida; St. Paul, Minnesota; Wilmington, Delaware; Oxford, Massachusetts; and in Anne Arundel County, Maryland.

The special schools are admittedly costlier than in-school suspension centers, but the results have been judged worth the expense in many school districts.

Alternative schools offer extensive counseling services and remedial academic programs for problem kids, who often are far behind in their classroom studies.

Huntley Cross, principal of the Anne Arundel County Learning Center, says he and his staff make a conscious effort to become involved with students.

"Kids take failure very personally. As a consequence, they don't feel very good about themselves when they come here. We try to change that.

"For at least one period in their lives, we want our kids to realize someone cares."

Enrollment at the Learning Center ranges from 60 to 100 junior-high-aged youths, mostly 14- and 15-year-old males. All of the students have been suspended from other schools in the district, and their attendance at the

continued on page 33

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continued from page 28

Discipline

Learning Center is mandatory, not optional.

The typical student attends school at the center for six to nine months before returning to his or her regular classroom.

Classes at the center are small, averaging ten students each. The academic focus is on basic reading and math skills; the behavior emphasis is on self-discipline. Teachers go over each student's work every 15 minutes and initial daily report cards after each class period.

"Every staff member tries to develop a special relationship with the students," Cross says.

Unruly students at the center must fill out forms listing what they've done wrong and how they plan to improve their behavior. If a student refuses, he or she is sent to the school's "back room," a type of in-school suspension center. Corporal punishment is never used at the Learning Center.

Of the students who have "graduated" from the Learning Center and returned to regular classrooms during the past five years, two-thirds have not been suspended again—an admirable record for students with serious behavior problems.

Behavior contracting: Drawing the line on discipline problems

In many communities, one solution to the discipline problem has been to spell out exactly what type of behavior is expected of students—and what will happen if expectations are not met.

Behavior codes and contracts cover such matters as getting to class on time, completing homework, and abiding by conduct rules. The written contracts usually are signed by students, parents, and teachers.

Officials at El Camino High School in Sacramento, California, credit a strict new behavior code for a dramatic turnabout in student discipline problems—and the reversal of a serious decline in enrollment.

Before the introduction of the new behavior code, El Camino was losing many of its middle-class students to private schools. Then the school was

continued

continued

Discipline

designated as a fundamental (basics) attendance center within the Sacramento district. Now enrollment is increasing steadily.

"We were at the point where we wanted to see our students educated properly or not at all," principal Joseph Petterle says.

Now El Camino parents and students are asked to sign a contract stating that they understand and will follow school rules "to the letter."

According to Petterle, the emphasis at El Camino is not on catering to troublemakers but on maintaining an orderly environment for the majority of students who are not disruptive.

"There are certain things we won't tolerate here, and we don't spend a lot of time talking about what's unacceptable," Petterle says.

Patterle explains, "We're trying to focus in a positive way on the majority of the students."

Under the El Camino code, in-school alcohol and drug use are designated as "one strike and you're out" offenses; suspension is mandatory. The behavior code also stresses regular attendance and notification of parents if problems arise, academic as well as disciplinary.

"It's amazing how kids adapt," Petterle says. "It all depends on where you draw the line."

Peer counseling: Kids helping kids

Peer counseling programs are an integral part of discipline programs in Seattle, Washington; Cincinnati, Ohio; Salt Lake City, Utah; and other communities.

According to Larry Neufpickle, chairperson of the counseling department at Taft High School in Cincinnati, peer counseling has helped stretch services that have been limited by budget cuts.

Taft's peer counseling program has been in operation for three years. Student volunteers, who are trained in human relations workshops, make themselves available to other students during lunchtime. The most common problems the peer counselors help fellow students deal with are conflicts with other students and teachers.

"Student counselors get some credit for their work, but it's mostly a volunteer effort," Neufpickle reports.

In three of four Salt Lake City public high schools, student counselors are trained in special social studies courses that often attract students who have discipline problems themselves.

"Students see peer counseling as a way they can plug into the school more productively," says Betsy Thompson, a high school counselor in Salt Lake City. "After the course, the kids acquire the basic skills they need to counsel their friends informally," Thompson says.

The Salt Lake City peer counseling program has been operating for three years. In some instances, potential behavior problems are averted by assigning peer counselors to work with students who have had discipline problems in the past or are new to the school.

Another innovative Salt Lake City program is the Truan-

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cy School, which aims to help chronic truants by providing counseling services to both the students and their families.

In the Truancy School, parents who find themselves in juvenile court because their youngster is a chronic truant are required by the court to attend a three-week evening course with the child.

The course includes group counseling and discussion of how to set and achieve behavior goals. School officials report that about 80 percent of students who attend Truancy School with their parents significantly improve their attendance records.

Assertive discipline: Confidence is the key

In many schools, the heart of the discipline problem is a buffaloed classroom teacher.

School administrators say many teachers do not have adequate training in classroom management techniques. As a result, the teachers are insecure and uninformed about how to exercise their authority.

For teachers who need confidence, California education consultant Lee Canter developed his "assertive discipline" program. Canter formulated his approach after observing the best teachers he could find during a six-year period.

Canter's research underscored some commonsense wisdom about classroom discipline: Teachers need to clearly and firmly assert their authority without becoming hostile or indifferent to students.

"Assertive teachers do not tolerate any student who is stopping them from teaching, or preventing other students from learning," Canter says. "And, most important, they recognize and reinforce the behavior of students who behave appropriately."

Since Canter started to spread the assertive discipline gospel in 1976, over 300,000 teachers have studied his methods, primarily at workshops in their schools.

However, Canter's approach has been criticized on the

Corporal punishment: Does it work?

It's an age-old question, but most experts today answer it with a resounding "No!"

Most teachers who have specialized in working with disruptive students say spanking or hitting is ineffective. Further, the teachers say corporal punishment can backfire and compound a student's behavior problems.

Nevertheless, the Supreme Court ruled in 1977 that states can permit corporal punishment in the schools. Since then, the practice has become more widespread and is illegal only in Massachusetts, New Jersey, Maine, Hawaii, and in some local school districts including New York City, Atlanta, Baltimore, and St. Louis.

Irwin Hyman, director of the Center for the Study of Corporal Punishment and Alternatives in the Schools at Temple University, says states where corporal punishment is commonly practiced in schools have higher per-pupil school vandalism costs.

"Kids want justice," says Hyman, who has studied corporal punishment and school discipline for ten years. "When the rules are firm and fair and are seen as reasonable, there are fewer discipline problems. Then the issue of corporal punishment becomes irrelevant."

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continued

Discipline

grounds that some "assertive" teachers have tended to neglect the positive reinforcement aspect of his approach.

Canter concedes that there is some truth in the charges about excessive punishments. He warns parents to beware of inappropriate punishments committed in the name of assertive discipline and discipline in general, such as using unventilated closets for in-school suspension centers.

How parents can help

If you suspect that discipline is a problem in your youngster's school—either too much or too little—discuss the matter with the principal.

Find out how many students are suspended each year or semester and how this compares with other schools in the district. Ask for an explanation of the school's discipline policies, and find out whether any of the innovative approaches discussed in this article are being used. If not, volunteer to help in developing a solution.

In some school districts, budget cuts threaten the survival of alternative schools and in-school suspension centers, which require smaller classes and special counseling services.

Make sure your school board and community leaders are aware of the full benefits of effective student discipline programs. For example, Houston officials credit the student referral centers discussed earlier with lowering the number

of youths who are involved in crimes, such as breaking and entering, during the daytime.

Remind officials that such programs make good economic sense, too, since school districts lose state revenue each day a student is suspended from the classroom. Students who are attending classes at alternative schools and in-school suspension centers are still counted in attendance figures.

Finally, make sure you personally set high standards of behavior for your children, and that you enforce discipline appropriately and consistently in your home.

"Parental support is absolutely essential to any effort to improve discipline in the schools," Lee Canter says.

For more information

- *Student Discipline Problems and Solutions*, published by the American Association of School Administrators, is available for $10.95 per copy. To obtain the report, write to the AASA, 1801 North Moore Street, Arlington, VA 22209.
- *Student Discipline: Practical Approaches*, published by the National School Boards Association, is available for $7.50 per copy. To obtain a copy, write, NSBA Information Services Department, 1055 Thomas Jefferson Street NW., Washington, DC 20007.
- Further information about corporal punishment issues is available from the National Center for the Study of Corporal Punishment and Alternatives in the Schools, 822 Ritter Hall South, Temple University, Philadelphia, PA 19122 (phone 215/787-6091).

—Written with Jeanne E. Saddler

ATTACHMENT F

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Phoenix Gazette, June 29, 1983

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District OKs stricter rules on discipline

By Lori Baker
Gazette Northwest Bureau

GLENDALE — Stricter discipline and attendance rules, which received mixed reactions from parents, have been approved by the Glendale Union High School District Governing Board.

The vote was 3-0, with board members Craig Trueblood, Don Voss and Bill Stout supporting the regulations. Anne Schulz and Richard Stapley were absent from last week's meeting, but they had voted in favor of the new rules during previous meetings.

The vote represented the first districtwide regulations on discipline and attendance.

Students will lose class credit if they are absent more than 12 times in a semester, truant (unexcused absence) more than four times in a semester, or tardy more than four times in a nine-week period.

Students who lose credit in a class would be required to drop that class and attend a study hall instead. If dropping the class means the student no longer is enrolled in four classes, he would be expelled.

The discipline policies address violations ranging from classroom disruptions to dress codes.

The board received letters from parents supporting the new regulations, which will go into effect in fall.

But during public hearings some parents expressed concern over students who were "legitimately ill" being penalized.

Assistant Superintendent Tim Waters said students may appeal to their principals. If they are not satisfied, students eventually can appeal to the Governing Board.

A separate policy dealing with due process is expected to receive final board approval during a meeting at 7:30 p.m. July 6 in the board room, 7650 N. 43rd Ave.

Parents will be notified when their children have attendance or discipline problems. Students may be suspended or expelled for certain violations.

The new attendance and discipline policies were drafted by an ad hoc committee after a year of discussions. The 11-member committee examined procedures in Tucson's Sunnyside District and Phoenix Union, Chandler, Mesa and Scottsdale districts.

The rules will be included in student handbooks that will be distributed at pre-registration in August.

Waters expects to see behavioral changes in students as a result of the new rules.

"If people want to go to our schools,

See ● Rules, NW-3

● Rules

From NW-1

they will have to change their behavior," he said.

Students will be prohibited from loitering or smoking on property adjacent to their schools as part of the "good neighbor conduct" regulation.

Rules on dress codes also have been adopted. Students are not allowed to wear anything considered distracting. For example, they may not wear or carry symbols that endorse or imply the use of substances that are not legally available to minors or which have profane or sexual connotations.

Earlier this year, about 200 Washington High School students protested a local T-shirt ban imposed by Principal Voie Coy.

Moon Valley High School Principal Janet Barry had instituted a similar policy, but there was no opposition.

The districtwide policy will supercede those rules.

Rules also address classroom disruptions, oral and physical abuse of staff, disobedience and profanity.

ATTACHMENT G

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Montgomery County Public Schools
Rockville, Maryland

NAME:

GRADE:

SCHOOL:

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Student Rights & Responsibilities

WITH STAFF IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES

FALL 1982

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

The following policy was adopted by the Montgomery County Board of Education on April 28, 1975. This policy was amended and a statement on discipline adopted March 21 and April 28, 1977, respectively, and was most recently amended June 2, 1981.

The Policy

PREAMBLE

One of the goals of school systems throughout the United States is the development in students of an appreciation of the democratic way of life. This is also one of the goals of education of the Montgomery County Public Schools. An appreciation of the democratic way of life must include the study of our national heritage and, to the fullest extent possible, opportunities for students to exercise their rights and assume their responsibilities as citizens.

Another primary task of the school is to create a stimulating learning climate for all students. Two essential factors in such a learning climate are the active involvement of students in their education, including the planning and evaluation thereof, and the fostering of a spirit of inquiry where students may freely express their own views and listen to and evaluate the opinions of others.

The policy statement which follows establishes those student rights and responsibilities which are most directly involved in the educational process and which foster student involvement in that process.

However, this statement should not be interpreted as being all inclusive. The student has rights guaranteed by the Constitution and the law that are not reiterated here. Basic among these Constitutional rights is the concept that all persons are presumed innocent until proven guilty. There are also some limitations on student rights that are not elaborated in the statement. One basic limitation is that the exercise of rights by one individual or group may not infringe on the rights of another individual or group. Other limitations are found in state law, bylaws of the State Board of Education, and policies of the Montgomery County Board of Education.

The effective implementation of this policy requires an exercise of good faith on the part of the Board of Education, staff, students, and parents in a common effort to achieve an appropriate balance of rights and responsibilities, an atmosphere of respect for the rights of others, including respect for legally constituted authority, and a learning climate such that each individual may realize as fully as possible his true worth and his capacity to make a positive contribution to society. The proper exercise of the rights enumerated in this document is a responsibility. By accepting the right to be involved in shaping the educational system, the student takes on part of the responsibility for the quality of that system.

This policy applies to all students enrolled in MCPS. Eighteen-year-old students may assume the rights of majority where applicable. All students will be encouraged to exercise their rights maturely. Elementary students will be provided the opportunity to learn about their rights and responsibilities and the mature exercise of these rights through classroom discussion and counseling, as needed. Modifications of actions, taken under the statement on discipline, are suggested to accommodate elementary age pupils.

I. STUDENT PARTICIPATION

A. Planning Classroom Activities

1. In each course and at each grade level, students have the right to participate in suggesting interest areas, planning classroom activities, and evaluating the course. Such participation shall not abridge the curricular requirements of the State of Maryland and the Montgomery County Public Schools' *Program of Studies*.

2. Student suggestions and recommendations concerning course offerings, their content, and the instructional materials used shall be permitted and shall be actively solicited by the faculty and administration.

B. Assembly Programs

1. Students and faculty shall work jointly on selecting, planning, and conducting assembly programs.

2. The principal is responsible for determining that the choice of topics and speakers is consistent with MCPS Goals of Education, and the principal shall determine whether attendance shall be voluntary or required.

C. Student-planned Educational Programs

1. Programs Scheduled Outside the School Day

a) Students, in consultation with faculty advisors, may hold voluntary programs of interest to students outside of the school day.

b) Students shall have the prime responsibility for the nature, content, planning, and conducting of these programs.

c) These programs may be disapproved by the principal only if the activity or content is in violation of law or Board of Education policy or poses a potential threat to the health and/or safety of students.

2. Programs Scheduled During the School Day

a) Students, in consultation with faculty, may organize seminars or short courses of study on selected topics during the school day as alternatives or additions to the regular school program, subject to the approval of the principal.

b) Students shall participate in the selection of appropriate topics and speakers.

c) The principal has the responsibility for assuring that there has been planning for a balanced presentation on controversial topics.

D. Development of Policies, Programs, and Rules

Students, through their elected student government or other authorized student organizations, have the right and responsibility to participate in the development and the revision of major MCPS and local school policies, programs, and rules which affect them. They further have the right to be notified reasonably in advance of the date of establishment of such policies and rules. Notification of these policies and rules shall be the responsibility of the school administration.

II. ATTENDANCE

Except when ill or excused, all students have a responsibility to attend their scheduled classes and other required activities throughout the school day. At grade levels 9 through 12, excessive unexcused absences will result in consultation with school administrators and/or specialists, parents, and the pupil and may result subsequently in loss of credit. At all grade levels, it is the student's responsibility to make up the work missed regardless of the reason for the absence. The state compulsory attendance law governs all students between six and sixteen years of age and also holds their parents accountable under penalty for such attendance.

III. STUDENT GOVERNMENT

A. Students have the responsibility and the right to establish and participate in student government organizations.

B. Recommendations made to the school administration by the student government organization shall receive a reply, either written or oral, with five school days. If the recommendations are extensive or complicated, the school administrator and student government shall mutually establish a reasonable time for either an oral or written response. The response shall give specific reasons in case the recommendations are not adopted or are modified.

C. The powers and scope of the student government shall be written in a constitution. This constitution shall be prepared by students with the advice of the school administration. The constitution or any part may not be disapproved when proposed nor subsequently abridged by the principal unless it specifically violates law or Board of Education policy or may substantially interfere with the effective operation of the school. The reasons for such abridgement must be stated in writing. The principal's decision may be appealed.

D. Any student legally enrolled in a school may hold office in student government at that school.

E. Student government organizations shall receive the support of school authorities with respect to use of supplies and equipment, access to bulletin boards and public address systems, and permission to use appropriate rooms during class periods, and the members of such organizations shall be granted hall passes and excused absences, when appropriate, by the school administration, insofar as these supports and special privileges can be justified as necessary for the conduct of student government business and are not an undue burden on school resources or the instructional program.

F. Each spring, the executive committee of the student government, the student government advisor, and the principal shall confer together for the purpose of considering any recommendations of the committee regarding the appointment of an advisor for the following school year. The final appointment decision shall rest with the principal.

IV. FREEDOM OF INQUIRY AND EXPRESSION

A. Speech

1. Students shall have the right and opportunity to examine any significant aspects of the topics presented in their courses; class discussions shall include a variety of viewpoints and must permit student expression of individual views on the topics at hand.

2. Students have a responsibility to permit differences of opinion and shall not interfere with the right of individuals to hold and express their own views.

B. Petitions

1. Students may circulate petitions for signature at all times except during classes and assemblies.

2. If petitions are presented by students to school authorities, students shall have the right to have their petitions considered and to receive replies within five school days.

C. Publications

1. School-sponsored Publications

a) School-sponsored publications such as newspapers, yearbooks, and literary magazines shall be encouraged.

b) Students have the right to decide on the content of school-sponsored publications within guidelines set cooperatively with the teacher-advisor, who shall provide direction and guidance on grammar, format, suitability of materials, and literary taste. The final decision on the guidelines rests with the teacher-advisor, subject to appeal.

c) School newspapers must provide an opportunity for members of the school community to express a variety of viewpoints.

2. Publications Produced Without School Sponsorship

a) Students may distribute in school, during the school day, publications that are not school-sponsored provided:

(1) They bear the name of the sponsoring organization or individual.

(2) Publications that are sold are published by students enrolled in Montgomery County Public Schools.

(3) The time, place, and manner of distribution have been agreed upon by students and administration in advance of the distribution.

b) The students have a right to be informed by the principal or his/her designee of any policy or procedure regarding distribution of publications which are not school-sponsored.

c) Distribution may be halted, and disciplinary action taken by the principal after the distribution has begun, if the publication:

(1) Is obscene, in that it meets all three of the following criteria:

(a) An average person applying contemporary standards would find that the material, taken as a whole, appeals to prurient interest in such subjects as sex, nudity, excretion, sadism, or masochism.

(b) The material depicts or describes such matters in a patently offensive way, going substantially beyond the ordinary limits of candor.

(c) The material, taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value.

(2) Is libelous, in that it includes any unprivileged, false, and malicious material which by printing, writing, signs, or pictures tends to expose to public scorn, hatred, or ridicule, done knowingly and/or recklessly and/or negligently.

(3) Causes or may be reasonably expected to cause substantial disruption of school activities.

(4) Is directed toward and likely to incite or produce imminent lawless action.

(5) Encourages actions which endanger the health or safety of students.

d) If the distribution is halted, the principal shall state his/her reasons in writing within two school days, providing a copy to the students making the distribution and a copy to the area associate superintendent. Such a decision may be appealed.

D. Posters and Similar Materials

1. Students may display posters and similar materials on designated bulletin boards and wall space normally used for posting materials, subject to the same procedures governing publications which are not school-sponsored.

2. The distribution through the schools of such printed matter as commercial advertisements, political campaign materials, and religious literature is restricted by MCPS regulation.

V. FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

A. Students have the right to organize and assemble for discussion of issues critical to them and to demonstrate peacefully.

B. The time and place of these assemblages shall be cooperatively established with the principal, with consideration given to the rights of all students.

C. The principal may require that the activity be held before school, during lunch time, or after the end of the school day if he/she has reason to believe that holding it during school hours would interfere with the regular school program. Such an action is subject to appeal.

D. Students organizing such activities are responsible for taking all reasonable steps to see that they are conducted in an orderly manner.

E. Students who participate in assemblies held as described in A through D above shall be excused from classes during the time the activity is scheduled.

VI. COCURRICULAR ORGANIZATIONS

A. Students shall have the right to form and participate in cocurricular organizations such as clubs.

B. Student organizations that conduct activities on school grounds must obtain authorization from the principal and must have faculty supervision, or such other adult supervision as may be approved by both the students and the principal.

VII. USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES

A. Authorized student organizations shall have access to school facilities, equipment, and communications resources, including the use of bulletin boards, the school public address system, and school duplication equipment, subject to reasonable limitations of time and expense.

B. Reasonable requirements for prior notice and the care and maintenance of school resources shall be observed by all student organizations.

VIII. NONDISCRIMINATION

A. Students have the right to equal and nondiscriminatory treatment in regard to participation in school-sponsored organizations, the awarding of grades, and the enforcement of school regulations, regardless of race, sex, religion, handicap, ethnic origin, economic status, or

for any other reason except as provided by law or by requirements reasonably related to the purpose of the activity.

B. School-sponsored student organizations have the right to equal and nondiscriminatory treatment in decisions regarding enforcement of school regulations.

IX. DRESS AND GROOMING

Student dress and grooming are the responsibility of students and their parents, except in situations where the standard of dress and grooming is a reasonable requirement of a course or activity, is necessary for reasons of health and safety, or disrupts school proceedings.

X. STUDENT RECORDS

A. A student and his/her parents, together or separately, have the right to review the student's cumulative school records in conference with appropriate school personnel, who shall explain and interpret their contents if requested.

B. A student who has reached the age of 18, or a younger student who has the written permission of his/her parents or is accompanied by his/her parents, may examine his/her confidential records and health records, provided the appropriate school or health department official is present to explain and interpret these records if requested.

C. A student and his/her parents have the right to challenge for cause any material in the student's educational records and to present evidence or argument that such material should be changed or removed. The appropriate school official may decide through an informal conference whether the challenged material is to be changed or removed. That decision is subject to a formal hearing.

D. A student who has reached the age of 18, or a younger student who has the concurrence of his/her parents, must give written permission to the school before that school may provide student records to employers, colleges, and other persons outside the school system.

E. In all cases, access to student records by school personnel shall be based on a legitimate need to know for purposes relating to the student's education.

XI. SEARCH AND SEIZURE

A. Every principal, assistant principal, or authorized security officer of a public school may conduct a reasonable search of a student on the school premises if he/she has probable cause to believe that the student has in his/her possession an item, the possession of which constitutes a criminal offense under the laws of the State of Maryland. The search must be made in the presence of a third party who is of majority age.

B. Every principal, assistant principal, or authorized security officer of a public school may conduct a search of every part of the physical plant of the school and, upon reasonable cause, students' lockers. The right of these school officials to search lockers must be previously announced or published within the school.

C. Any confiscated property belonging to a student must be returned to the student or his/her parents within a reasonable time, except as required by law or by consideration of safety for students and staff.

D. At the time a student is searched, the student shall be informed of his/her right to appeal the legality of the search.

XII. DISCIPLINE

A. A countywide philosophy regarding discipline in the schools and the specific rights and responsibilities which all members of the school community should assume are presented in the attached *Statement on Discipline*. In general, student conduct that disrupts class work, involves disorder, or invades the rights of others will not be tolerated and may be cause for suspension or other disciplinary action.

B. Suspension and Expulsion

1. Each student has a right to an education; any action that deprives him/her of this right shall occur for just cause and in accordance with due process of law.

2. Parents shall be notified promptly in all cases of suspension.

3. If a student's conduct necessitates his/her being removed from class pending a parent conference, that conference shall be scheduled as early as possible.

4. A temporary removal from one or all classes does not constitute a formal suspension unless designated as such in writing by the principal. Such a temporary removal should not exceed two days.

5. A principal shall have the right to suspend a student. Under the laws of Maryland, such a suspension must be for cause and must not exceed five school days.

6. Prior to any suspension or temporary removal from all classes for disciplinary reasons, students must be given an informal hearing including:

a) Oral or written notice of the charges against them

b) An explanation of the evidence

c) An opportunity to present their side of the story

7. Students whose presence poses a danger to persons or property or an ongoing threat of disrupting the academic process may be immediately removed from the school. In such cases, the necessary notice and informal hearing shall follow as soon as practicable.

8. Suspensions of more than five days or expulsions may be made by the area associate superintendent at

the request of the principal as provided for in MCPS regulations.

9. In the event of a suspension of more than five days or expulsion, a detailed hearing procedure shall be provided and, in addition to the above provisions:

a) The student shall be informed, in writing, of the charges against him/her, including a summary of the evidence upon which the charges are based.

b) The student shall be informed of his/her right to be represented or advised during the proceedings by a person or persons of his/her choosing.

c) The student shall be given reasonable time to prepare a case.

10. In all cases of suspension or expulsion, the letter of suspension should include a statement of the rights of appeal.

11. Students who are suspended from school, other than those on inschool suspension, are not permitted on school grounds during the period of suspension. Students on suspension may not participate in any school sponsored activity.

C. Other Disciplinary Standards

1. Punishment shall be fair and appropriate and not designed to embarrass students.

2. Group detention for actions of known or unknown persons and academic tasks imposed for the sole purpose of punishment are forbidden.

3. Physical punishment is not permitted. Physical force is not permitted except to restrain a disruptive pupil and then only when the force is reasonable under the circumstances.

4. Nonschool-sponsored activities of students and activities unrelated to school, carried on outside school hours and away from school grounds, are not the responsibility of school authorities; and no student shall be penalized by the school for any participation in these activities.

D. Reduction of grades shall not be used as a punitive or disciplinary measure.

E. School administration and faculty, parents, and students must be involved in the planning and implementation of appropriate disciplinary procedures for each school.

XIII. DUE PROCESS

A. All systemwide and local school regulations that restrict a student's liberties and rights must have a valid goal and must be reasonably expected to achieve this goal.

B. Reasonable notice will be given regarding the availability of all published policies, regulations, and rules affecting students. The MCPS *Policies and Procedures* and this document should be located in the media center of each school and available to students. Each school should publish its disciplinary statement, developed cooperatively by parents, students, and staff, and make copies available to all students. Students shall not be punished for violating any rules which are not covered by state law, MCPS *Policies and Procedures*, the countywide *Statement on Discipline*, the disciplinary statement issued by the school, or other previously published rules.

C. Students have the right and responsibility to seek redress of grievances through established MCPS procedures.

D. Students who pursue grievances may seek and shall be entitled to an advocate who may represent and assist the students during conferences related to the grievances.

E. Procedures for Complaints and Appeals

1. Students have the right to appeal actions of school administrators and student governments restricting student freedom and have the right to appeal actions of school-affiliated student organizations denying a student membership.

2. Each school shall establish procedures for the consideration of student problems and the processing of student complaints and appeals. These procedures should be developed through the cooperative efforts of students, faculty, and administration and shall provide for defined time frames to insure speedy resolution of complaints.

3. The student has the right to impartial, expeditious hearings, preceded by clear explanation of procedures for further appeal; and the student has the right to examine witnesses.

4. Any decision of the principal may be appealed to the area associate superintendent and the superintendent of schools. (This appeal procedure is outlined in the guidelines to this section.)

5. Nothing in either the local school or countywide appeals procedures shall be construed as limiting the right of any student having a complaint to discuss the matter informally with appropriate school personnel.

6. No reprisals of any kind shall be taken by anyone against any student as a result of a complaint or appeal.

7. Local discipline, grievance, and appeal procedures shall be reviewed annually by local school authorities and student representatives. The MCPS appeals procedure shall be reviewed annually.

XIV. PATRIOTIC EXERCISES

A. Students shall have the opportunity to participate in and/or observe patriotic exercises in their schools.

B. No student shall be required to take a loyalty oath, say a pledge, sing an anthem, or take part in patriotic exercises.

C. Students shall not interrupt the participation of other students in patriotic exercises.

XV. FREEDOM OF RELIGION

A. Schools shall not conduct religious exercises nor sanction or support any particular religious beliefs or practices.

B. A student has the right to observe his/her own religious beliefs and practices in school, provided the practices do not violate the rights of others nor disrupt or interfere with school activities.

XVI. DISTRIBUTION AND REVIEW OF THIS DOCUMENT

A. This document shall be made available to all students and shall be distributed to all faculty members with directions as to how to implement the policy in the schools. Copies of the document should be made available to parents.

B. This document shall be reviewed in 1976 and biennially thereafter as follows:

1. A committee composed of equal representation from faculty, parents, administrators, and students shall make recommendations.

2. The committee's report shall be distributed to, but not limited to, the countywide student government associations, the superintendent of schools, and the Board of Education.

3. The Board of Education will, following receipt of the committee's report and the superintendent's recommendations, review the document's effectiveness and make such modifications as may be warranted.

STATEMENT ON DISCIPLINE

A Philosophy and Suggested Responsibilities and Rights Related to School Discipline

The Board of Education of Montgomery County believes that learning is a continuous evolutionary process. The Board also believes that while learning is not confined to a school building it is nonetheless the primary function of the school. Like all social institutions, the school must evolve a certain set of rules and regulations to govern its participants and to facilitate the performance of its primary function. These rules should reflect a balance between the responsibilities and rights of the individual and the responsibilities and rights of the group. They must also reflect the need to promote an environment conducive to effective and efficient learning and the need for mutual respect and cooperation between all segments of the school community.

The administration of a discipline policy should focus not on punishment but on changing or controlling inappropriate behavior. To that end, all available resources should be utilized. Fair, firm, and consistent application of a policy is expected; and students should be made aware of the consequences of misbehavior. It is equally important that there be careful evaluation of the individual situation so that the school's response to the student is appropriate. While causes are not always evident, misbehavior may be related to such factors as surplus energy, physical discomfort, a poor self-image, learning problems, irrelevant curriculum, poor classroom management, and stresses on the student unrelated to school. In some instances, changing the environment will be the most appropriate response; in other situations, the student and his behavior must be dealt with directly.

In a school system the size of Montgomery County, absolutely consistent application of a discipline policy, if valued as the overriding consideration and taken to the extreme, would require the listing of every possible infraction with a specific, mandated disciplinary action in response to each. At the other extreme, recognition of both the diversity of community settings within the county and the individuality of each disciplinary situation would suggest that each school should establish its own disciplinary standards and apply them only as appropriate to each student's situation. The Board finds the need to balance these two opposing considerations and, therefore, elects to follow a middle-ground policy. Certain major infractions are recognized as requiring consistent countywide actions from and direction for all schools. For these infractions, a specified range of responses must be utilized by all school personnel, with the severity and/or frequency of the infraction determining where in the range the penalty should lie. At the same time, for disciplinary infractions not established with mandated disciplinary actions, development of appropriate standards and responses will remain an individual school responsibility subject to review by the area associate superintendent. Input from students, parents, and school personnel will permit these disciplinary actions to be tailored to the needs and desires of each community within the county. The Board seeks in this way to provide consistent responses to the more severe infractions without prejudging every disciplinary situation and without depriving individual school administrators of the opportunity for flexible and creative responses to the vast majority of cases.

The Board believes that discipline is learned and, therefore, can and should be taught in the home, school, and community. The child also learns through experience and imitation of those around him. Discipline is a developmental process. As the child matures, he/she should be given increased responsibility in keeping with his/her developmental level and social maturity and every opportunity to practice self-discipline in order to positively reinforce responsible action. The ultimate goal should be the internalization of discipline so that little external enforcement is required. The Board believes that this philosophy will foster the development of happy, self-disciplined, self-reliant personalities capable of behaving appropriately as the situation demands. It hopes that this philosophy will produce individuals with social consciences who see the good sense in acceptable behavior and who are spared the consequences of misbehavior.

The cooperation of many people is necessary to establish and maintain a positive learning environment in each school throughout the Montgomery County public school system. Each member of the school community must assume certain

responsibilities in order to assure that the rights of all are protected. The following responsibilities and rights are not all inclusive but rather relate specifically to school discipline:

A. The student has the right to a public school education in an environment conducive to learning. He/she is expected to do the following:

1. Attend school and classes regularly, to arrive on time, and to fulfill to the best of his/her ability the course objectives

2. Understand and observe the rules of the school

3. Recognize that there are channels through which rules or conditions can be studied or questioned and realize that he/she must use those channels

4. Participate in the development of school rules in keeping with his/her maturity level

B. The parent has the right to expect that the school will address the learning needs of his/her child in an equitable way, respecting the individual differences of children. The parent has the right to be informed of his/her child's progress and of areas where closer home-school cooperation is needed. The parent is expected to do the following:

1. Send his/her child to school regularly, on time, and prepared to work

2. Respond to communications from the school pertaining to his/her child

3. Cooperate with school staff in solving behavioral problems

4. Develop in his/her children respect for the rights and property of other people

5. Understand and support the fair, consistent administering of school rules and policies

C. The teacher has the right to work in an atmosphere which fosters satisfaction in his/her work with the support and guidance of the administration in maintaining high professional standards. The teacher is expected to do the following:

1. Work with students so they understand the objectives of the course and what they are expected to learn

2. Help the student realize that as an individual he/she is important and that, as a group member, he/she should act in a responsible way

3. Encourage and help the student to understand and support the rules of the school and to participate in formulating rules relating to him/her and his/her role in the school

4. Know and enforce consistently and fairly the rules and policies of the school

5. Use procedures appropriate for age, background, and level of maturity in fostering appropriate behavior and dealing with inappropriate behavior in students

6. Seek conferences with parents and other school personnel in an effort to help students who present behavioral problems

D. The principal has the right to expect the cooperation of staff, students, and parents as he/she seeks to facilitate the fulfillment of the school's function as an educational institution. The principal or his/her designee is expected to do the following:

1. Make known and interpret to students, parents, and staff the MCPS discipline policies and the local school discipline policy

2. Implement specific plans for effective student, parent, and staff participation in the formulation and review of the local school discipline policy

3. Support all building personnel to maintain appropriate and effective discipline

4. Be available for conferences with staff, students, parents, and others on discipline matters

5. Provide teachers assistance with serious problem situations

6. Inform teachers of administrative disciplinary action

7. Identify the line of authority in the building in his/her absence so that disciplinary matters may be handled as expeditiously as possible

E. If students, parents, teachers, and principals are to enjoy the rights and meet the responsibilities enumerated in this policy statement, the Board of Education and the MCPS administration have a responsibility to support in every way possible the intent of this policy and to ensure its fair and consistent implementation. In this regard, the superintendent is expected to do the following:

1. Assist the schools in applying this policy and help in developing the local disciplinary codes which complement the countywide statement

2. Develop all necessary countywide regulations and procedures which are necessary to and consistent with this policy statement

3. Hold the area and local school administrators, teachers, parents, and students responsible for actions taken under this policy

4. Hold area and school administrators and teachers accountable for implementation of this policy

The Board and the superintendent expect to do the following:

1. Prepare and receive evaluations regarding the effectiveness of this policy and the local disciplinary codes and the application of both

2. Review and amend the policy based on these evaluations and MCPS experience with the Student Rights/Responsibilities and Discipline Policy

To these ends, the Board commits itself and the staff.

Implementation Guidelines

I. STUDENT PARTICIPATION

A. Planning Classroom Activities

Faculty and administration shall:

- Actively involve students in the learning process at levels consistent with student interest and maturity.
- Inform students of the general objectives of each course or unit and of the basis upon which their performance will be evaluated.[1]
- Provide an opportunity and encouragement for students to offer suggestions and recommendations concerning course offerings, course content, and instructional materials to be used.
- Involve students in suggesting interest areas, planning classroom activities, and evaluating courses.

Such involvement of students may continue throughout the course but may not delay or interfere with the instructional program.[2,3] Suggestions may be requested in writing.

Students have the responsibility to avail themselves of those opportunities for participation in classroom activities and to assist in establishing and carrying out the classroom rules and procedures which allow such activities.

B. Assembly Programs

Staff members shall:

- Make every effort to involve students in selecting, planning, and conducting assembly programs.
- Work cooperatively with students and the principal in the planning of such programs to assure these programs are consistent with MCPS Goals of Education.

The principal shall:

- Determine whether attendance at assembly programs shall be voluntary or required based on the nature and content of the programs.

C. Student-planned Educational Programs

1. Programs Scheduled Outside of the School Day

Principals:

- Shall encourage voluntary forums of interest to students.
- Shall support student efforts in securing faculty sponsors.
- May disapprove programs only if the activity or content is in violation of law or MCPS policy or poses a potential threat to the health and/or safety of students.

Students shall:

- Assume primary responsibility for the nature, content, and planning of such programs when these forums are student initiated.

2. Programs Scheduled During the School Day

Student planned programs should be encouraged.

Student organizers:

- Shall share with faculty sponsors and the principal the responsibility for making sure that topics chosen are consistent with MCPS Goals of Education.
- Shall assure that topics are appropriate to the level of maturity and intellectual ability of the students.
- Shall assure that outside speakers, if any, are qualified to present the subjects for which they are chosen.
- Shall make every effort to assure a balance of presentation of controversial topics.

The principal:

- Shall be responsible for seeing that proposed programs conform with these guidelines.
- Is responsible for final decisions regarding such programs.

D. Development of Policies, Programs, and Rules

Any office, department, or committee developing or revising a major MCPS policy affecting students will involve students in the revision or development of that policy. Such involvement may be accomplished by including student government representatives in meetings or through soliciting input at several stages of the process of policy development or revision from a widely based representative sampling of students.

In the revision or development of a major local school policy, program, or rule affecting students, there must be similar involvement of

1. MCPS Regulation 355-4, *Grading and Reporting Student Progress*
2. Curriculum Documents, Maryland State Department of Education
3. MCPS Program of Studies

students at the local schools.

Reasonably in advance of the date of establishment of policies and rules affecting students, principals will make available to students copies of such policies and rules through the media center or by posting them in locations convenient to students. An announcement should be made indicating the location of the policies and encouraging students to examine them. Staff members are encouraged to discuss with students any major policy affecting students at available opportunitites and to provide information and clarification as needed. Throughout the school year copies of any rules or policies affecting students should be available for examination by students.

Students regularly participate in the development of systemwide policies, programs, and rules through such arrangements as student membership on the Council on Instruction, student involvement on various MCPS committees and task forces, and input from the countywide student government organizations. A regulation outlines the procedures for the superintendent to appoint systemwide committees and explains that nominations of students are obtained from school principals and/or the administrative assistant for student affairs.[4] Students who are interested in volunteering for such committees should notify their principals or student governments, in writing, of their interest and the specific area of desired involvement.

II. ATTENDANCE

A. The school administration and faculty are responsible for requiring punctual and regular school and class attendance and for providing information to parents regarding the attendance of their children. The MCPS policy, *Grading & Reporting Student Progress*,[5] provides for regular periodic reporting of attendance to parents as part of the normal evaluation process.

The Public School Laws of Maryland define eight conditions under which a student's absence from school is to be considered lawful. The State of Maryland further defines nine other causes of absence. Traditionally, all absences which can be classified as lawful under the state code have been conssidered as excused upon receipt of a written explanation of the absence. All other absences have been classified under one of the nine "Other Causes of Absence" as set forth by the State code.[6] [7]

The principal or designee has the responsibility for determining whether such activities can be classified as lawful and therefore excused under State Bylaw 13.07.02.01 which staes ". . . Work or activity approved or sponsored by the school, the local school system, or the state education agency, accpeted by the local superintendent of schools or the school principal, or any persons duly authorized by the superintendent or principal, as reason for excusing the pupils."

A number of activities or work situations which schools should accept as excused when approval for the absence has been requested five school days in advance in writing from the parent, are included below:

1. Service as a volunteer student aide in MCPS outdoor education programs;

2. Visits to college campuses and participation in college orientation programs;

3. Scheduled interviews with prospective employers;

4. Seasonal extended hours of work for students enrolled in cooperative education programs (See MCPS Form 280-82);

5. Short-term, full-time work assignments for students not enrolled in cooperative education program;

6. Participation in activities sponsored by the MCPS, County or State agencies;

7. Normally, requests for family travel are not excused absences. However, in cases of unusual family circumstances, a student's absence may be approved after a parent contact by the appropriate local school administrator.

The school administration normally will secure recommendations from the student's teacher(s) concerning the possible effect of the anticipated absence on the student's academic progress and the options available for make-up work before making a decision to approve the absence.

All absences must be explained in a written note prepared by the parent or guardian or by the student if 18 or over and exercising the rights granted under the Age of Majority law. In either event, there will be a limit of three school days in submitting the written note. After this three-day limit, all undocumented absences should be classified as unexcused unless the principal or designee has granted an extension to a student's request during these three days.

At grade levels 9 through 12 where credits are applicable, excessive unexcused absences could result in the loss of credit.

The following procedures are minimal guidelines to be implemented in dealing with all students

4. MCPS Regulation 255-1, *Establishing Systemwide Committees*
5. MCPS Regulation 355-4, *Grading and Reporting Student Progress*
6. Maryland Pupil Data System — Manual of Instructions
7. MCPS Regulation 515-1, *Pupil Attendance*

grades 9 through 12. Additional guidelines to increase the opportunities for counseling with students and parents may be implemented if deemed appropriate by individual schools.

1. When a student misses five or more sessions of one class during a semester due to truancy or indifference, an LC (Loss of Credit) will be given for all marking periods within that semester.

2. The following actions will be taken by the local school for each of the five unexcused absences:

a. First unexcused absence—teacher informs and counsels the student.

b. Second unexcused absence—teacher counsels the student and telephones the home when feasible.

c. Third unexcused absence—a form letter recommending a parent conference is sent by the teacher to the principal or designee who mails it to the home.

d. Fourth unexcused absence—teacher gives final warning to student and the school should contact the home again.

e. Fifth unexcused absence—teacher sends form letter to the principal or designee who will insure that the student and parents are notified that the LC (Loss of Credit) policy will be invoked. They will be informed that LC will be given for all marking periods within the semester and credit will be denied for the semester. The student and parents will also be advised of the student's right to petition for restoration of credit.

3. If the student has accumulated more than one unexcused absence, when he/she returns to the class the school should take action at the appropriate step above.

Any involved party may request a conference to discuss particular absences and loss of credit. Such conferences should include school administrators, pupil personnel workers, and/or specialists, the parents and the student, and should focus on determining the causes of the unexcused absences. The recommendations resulting from the conference should include, but not be limited to, student counseling to establish and clarify meaningful educational objectives and to consider alternative programs for the student.

After a student has been informed of receiving a Loss of Credit, there are three levels at which alternatives may be provided for the students. These are:

1. The first level involves the teacher whom the student may petition for restoration of credit. The teacher will review the request and make a recommendation to the principal, who shall have the final approval.

2. The second level involves the principal whom the student may petition for an alternative means of gaining credit through the school or through continuum education services.

3. The third level involves the principal or designee, student, parent, and teacher, all of whom must agree to the student's future status after both the teacher and principal have declined support for the student's petition. Two issues should be considered. The first issue involves a determination of the need for the credit. If the credit will be needed to meet graduation requirements, there are several alternative routes that the student may follow:

a. Repeat the course in the next semester or in the next school year in the regular school program.

b. Repeat the course in Evening High School, Saturday School, or Summer School.

The second issue involves the more immediate determination of the student's daily schedule of courses. The options available include:

1. Continuing in the course on audit basis.

2. Dropping the course and enrolling in a study skills class.

3. Dropping the course and enrolling in a non-credit teacher supervised program.

4. Dropping the course and reducing the school day schedule.

C. Other MCPS regulations which affect student attendance include Suspensions and Expulsions; Student Withdrawals from Classes; and Extracurricular Activities, which provides that the principal may refuse to permit a student to participate in an extracurricular activity if the student has an unexcused absence on the same day as the activity.[8] [9] [10]

D. All staff members have a responsibility to work cooperatively with students and parents to improve student attendance. Staff are encouraged to find solutions to problems causing chronic student absences through evaluation of school programs and exploration of ways of working individually with students who evidence a need for special attention.

E. Students have a responsibility to make up work regardless of the reason for the absence. When the absence is an excused one, the teacher has an obligation to assist the pupil in making up the classwork missed. When the absence is unexcused, the teacher has no obligation to assist the pupil in

8. MCPS Regulation 513-3, *Suspension and Expulsion*
9. MCPS Regulation 515-2, *Student Withdrawal from Class*
10. MCPS Regulation 520-2, *Extracurricular Activities*

making up work for credit; however, the pupil is still responsible for making up the work so that continuing effective course participation is possible.

III. STUDENT GOVERNMENT

A. The school personnel must support the right of students to establish and participate in a student government organization. The principal must assure that student government organization provides students with a voice in school affairs. The student body must work toward effective student government. The student government must be accountable to the students.

B. The school administration shall reply to recommendations by the student government in writing or orally within five school days giving reasons for rejection or modification of plans. If the recommendations are extensive or complicated, the school administrator and student government shall mutually establish a reasonable time for response.

C. The school personnel should provide advice as needed to students as they prepare a written constitution or amendments to the existing constitution. The principal may not disapprove nor abridge the constitution or any part of it unless it violates the law or policy. The reasons for abridgement must be stated in writing, and the students must be given an opportunity to revise the constitution.

D. There may be no eligibility requirements for student government officers except that they be legally enrolled in the school.

E. School personnel should encourage student support of the student government. Teachers shall honor as excused those absences approved by the administration for students to participate in student government activities.

F. School personnel should provide access to school facilities to the student government as long as such use does not interfere with instruction or the orderly management of the school. The student government must not abuse these special privileges.

G. The principal, the student government executive committee, and advisor will meet annually regarding the appointment of the advisor. The principal will give careful consideration to the students' opinion before the advisor is appointed.

IV. FREEDOM OF INQUIRY AND EXPRESSION

Speech

The teacher shall:

- Assure the presentation of a variety of viewpoints on controversial topics within the limitations imposed by state or county curriculum documents.
- Permit expression of individual views so that students may weigh alternate ideas and form their own opinions.
- Encourage students to analyze and evaluate information before students form conclusions.
- Strive to promote tolerance for different opinions and respect for the rights of each person to hold and express an individual viewpoint.

Petitions

- School staff members will permit circulation of petitions outside of classes and assemblies.
- The principal may halt the circulation of petitions for the same reasons outlined for halting the distribution of publications produced without school sponsorship.
- School personnel presented with a student petition will respond in writing within five school days. Responses may be posted or may be forward to the originator if the originator can be identified.
- School administrators and students are encouraged to meet together to clarify any misunderstandings and to provide a forum for exchange of information on the topics that are the subject of the petition.

Publications

- School-sponsored publications are to be encouraged as important aspects of the learning experiences that schools can provide.
- The principal shall identify for each publication a qualified faculty advisor who shall be guided by standards for secondary school stated by secondary school scholastic press associations.
- The faculty advisor shall be responsible for working cooperatively with the publications staff on the development of guidelines, particularly regarding the areas of obscenity, libel, and privacy. The advisor has the responsibility for the final decision on such guidelines. Students may appeal the decisions on these guidelines according to the process established in the local school.
- The faculty advisor must make efforts to see that a variety of viewpoints are represented in school newspapers and that members of the school community have an opportunity to express their views through the newspaper.

Publications Produced Without School Sponsorship

- The school administration and faculty shall protect the right of students to distribute student-produced publications without school sponsorship.
- The principal shall assure that distribution rights shall be equal to those granted to school-sponsored publications.
- The principal or designee shall inform the publishers of circumstances under which distribution may be halted and of the penalties to which the

publisher is liable in case distribution is halted. The principal or designee should inform the publisher of the section of this policy that states conditions under which distribution of publications may be halted.

• If it becomes necessary for the principal to halt distribution of a nonschool-sponsored publication, the principal must state the reasons in writing within two school days, providing one copy to the students making the distribution and one copy to the area associate superintendent. The principal shall inform students that his/her decision may be appealed through the appeals process discussed in Section XIII, Due Process.

Posters and Similar Materials

• Students may display materials that are not school-sponsored on designated bulletin boards or wall spaces normally used for posting, subject to the same restrictions and procedures that govern the distribution of student publications that are not school-sponsored.

• Students who post materials which must be removed according to the guidelines covering nonschool-sponsored publications should be informed in writing of the reason that this posted materials must be removed. School administrators are encouraged to hold meetings with students following the removal of such material in order to provide clarification and information on the reasons for removing this material.

• Distribution of any commercial advertisements or announcements, political campaign material and religious literature is subject to restrictions and limitations.[11]

V. FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

The school staff must respect the rights of students to assemble for discussions of issues of importance to them and to demonstrate peacefully.

The principal:

• Shall explain why an activity is not allowed during the school day.
• May require the activity to be held outside of the school day or during lunch.
• Shall explain in writing if an activity is not allowed during the school day.
• May specify the type of supervision required and assign staff members to monitor the activity.

Students shall:

• Work cooperatively with the staff taking reasonable steps to assure the activity is orderly.
• Be excused from class during the activity.
• Make up missed work.

11. MCPS Regulation 270-2

VI. COCURRICULAR (EXTRACURRICULAR) ORGANIZATIONS

Faculty and administration shall:

• Encourage students to form and participate in student organizations.
• Become familiar with appropriate MCPS regulations.[12] [13]

Student organizations that conduct activities on school grounds shall:

• Have the principal's authorization
• Have faculty or other adult supervision as approved by both students and the principal
• Become familiar with appropriate MCPS regulations.[12] [13]

VII. USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES

School authorities shall assure that:

• Authorized student organizations be allowed the use of school facilities.
• Repair of any damages sustained shall be charged to the appropriate organization.[14]

VIII. NONDISCRIMINATION

School authorities may not discriminate against students:

• By excluding students from classroom or school sponsored activities.
• By giving preferential treatment in the application of rules.
• By the assignment of grades.

The list of prohibited discriminatory factors set forth in this policy is not intended to be exhausted.[15]

IX. DRESS AND GROOMING

School personnel may advise students about appropriate dress and grooming for school but may not establish dress codes.

School personnel may not discipline students for their style of dress or grooming unless it:

• Is likely to cause a disruption to school activities.
• Does cause a disruption to school activities.
• Endangers health or safety

12. MCPS Regulation 520-2, *Extracurricular Activities*
13. MCPS Regulation 230-1, *Afterschool Use of Facilities*
14. MCPS Regulation 230-3, *Loss of MCPS Property*
15. This section is consistent with other Board of Education policies as stated in the Policy Statement on Human Relations, MCPS Regulation 202-4, and the Policy Statement on Quality Education/ Racial Balance and with these federal laws: Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination by race, color, or national origin; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, which prohibits discrimination by sex; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which prohibits discrimination by handicap.

- Fails to meet a reasonable requirement of a course or activity.

X. STUDENT RECORDS

A. Record Maintenance

The principal shall be responsible for:

- Maintaining student records
- Protecting the rights of students and parents concerning access to and protection of student records
- Maintaining a log of disclosure for requests to review student records

B. Record Access

Parents and students:

- Must be granted access to students cumulative records
- May challenge any material in students records
- May request corrections, additions or deletions of information by writing the principal
- May request a formal hearing by submitting a written appeal to the Diagnostic and Professional Support Team Leader in the Office of Continuum Education once a change has been denied by the principal
- Should be familiar with MCPS regulations 545-1 and 275-4

The principal:

- Must meet with parents or students to discuss a request for a change of a student's record
- May agree to a change after meeting with eligible student or parent
- Must make corrections in records as soon as is practical

Authorized school personnel:

- Shall be permitted access to student records
- May request a record correction
- Shall become familiar with MCPS regulations 545-1 and 275-4

All other parties:

- Must have parent or student consent to have access to student records

XI. SEARCH AND SEIZURE

The principal, assistant principal, or authorized security officer may, upon reasonable cause, conduct a search of school premises including student lockers.[16] [17]

When a search of a student's locker is to be conducted, the authorized school official should make every reasonable effort to obtain the consent of the affected student(s) prior to the search.

The principal, assistant principal, or authorized security officer may conduct a search of a student under the following conditions:

- Has reason to suspect that student is in possession of an item, the possession of which constitutes a criminal offense under the laws of Maryland
- Informs the student of his/her right to appeal the legality of the search
- Conducts the search in the presence of a third party who is of majority age
- Returns confiscated material within a reasonable time unless it is material, the possession of which is illegal, or presents imminent danger to the school community.[18]

The principal shall inform parents and students, in writing, at the beginning of each school year regarding the laws and policies governing search and seizure.[18]

XII. DISCIPLINE

A. The school staff shall:

- Be responsible for insuring equitable treatment for students and maintaining a safe, healthy learning environment
- Respect the rights of students while taking disciplinary action as needed
- Be responsible for assuring that students are afforded equitable treatment and the school and county disciplinary procedures are followed in the treatment of any disruptive student behavior
- Be familiar with the *Statement of Discipline* and its implementation guidelines.

B. An MCPS regulation[19] details the procedures to be followed in suspension and should be adhered to with the utmost care by all involved MCPS personnel. This regulation provides for an appeal procedure which may extend to the Board of Education. Requests for appeal to the next higher level of administration must be in writing and must be submitted within ten school days of receipt of the written notification of the decision that is appealed. These rights of appeal must be included by the appropriate school administrator in the letter of suspension or expulsion. State law prohibits this appeal process from acting as a stay of the penalty. There are occassions when a student's conduct or other special circumstances necessitate removing the student from one or all classes without a formal suspension. In such cases, such a removal from class should usually not exceed two school days. When a student is removed from all classes for one or more days, the parent shall be notified; and if a

16. MCPS Regulation 270-7
17. Public School Law of Maryland, Chapter 2, Section 7-307
18. Public School Law of Maryland, Chapter 2, Section 7-307
19. MCPS Regulation 515-3, *Suspension*

transfer of classes is in process and the necessary arrangements take longer than two days, the parent shall also be notified of this fact. During this period, the student would usually remain in attendance at the school and would be involved in an educational program, although not in the regularly scheduled classes. An MCPS regulation[20] discusses specific procedures for various types of student withdrawals from classes.

In all cases of absence from class due to disciplinary action, staff members should make reasonable efforts to assist students in making up tests or other work missed.[21]

C. Other Disciplinary Standards

MCPS regulations which involve discipline or discipline-related actions are outlined in the guidelines to the *Statement on Discipline*.

1. School discipline procedures shall include kinds of punishment that are fair and appropriate. Where possible, the disciplinary action should be related to the offense. Schools are encouraged to assign tasks that involve the student in some constructive work as a form of disciplinary action and to provide adequate supervision of students who are assigned such tasks.

2. Academic tasks assigned in cases of detention must have instructional value for students and be related to the ongoing instructional program. Analyzing a mode of behavior in a paper is an acceptable assignment in instances of detention or punishment, whereas assigning additional problems in mathematics in an area where the student has already demonstrated mastery is not acceptable. Rote kinds of academic tasks such as copying pages from the dictionary or writing a statement a given number of times are not considered instructionally defensible. Staff members are reminded that grades are not to be used as a punitive or disciplinary action.

3. Physical punishment is prohibited and physical force is not permitted except to restrain a disruptive pupil and then only when the force is reasonable under the circumstances.[22]

4. Activities unrelated to school that are carried on by students outside school hours and away from school shall not be subject to discipline by school authorities. There may be instances when students' behavior outside of school is related to the school, e.g., the harassing of a school staff member. In such cases, the school may confer with the parent on this behavior.

D. School community involvement in the development of disciplinary procedures is required by the negotiated Agreement between the Montgomery County Education Association and the Board of Education and by MCPS policy and regulations. The guidelines to the *Statement on Discipline* outline some of the factors which should be included in these local procedures. Such community involvement is essential in developing a base of school support for disciplinary procedures.

Staff members are encouraged to seek ways to provide effective constructive disciplinary action and to work with the school administration in revising the discipline procedures annually as needed. It is the responsibility of every staff member, student, and parent to be informed on the school disciplinary procedures and to work cooperatively with the school administration to see that these procedures are followed.

XIII. DUE PROCESS

A., B. These sections are designed to provide fair treatment for each student involved in a discipline action or a grievance proceeding. In order to insure such treatment, school rules must be consonant with *MCPS Goals of Education* and published existing laws and regulations. Both the countywide and local school discipline codes should be published and made available to parents, students, and staff members. Enforcement of these rules and procedures shall be based on prudent investigation of the circumstances and judicious interpretation of rules and procedures. Students, on their part, have a responsibility to follow the established procedures in seeking changes in policy or procedures and in attempting to resolve complaints and grievances.

C., D. Each school shall establish procedures for the consideration of student problems and for processing of student complaints and appeals. These procedures should be developed through the cooperative efforts of students, faculty, and administrators. The administration shall provide for a defined time frame within these procedures so as to insure speedy resolution of complaints. Procedures for hearing and appeals within the local school shall be designed to insure that all particulars of the procedures and option for further appeal are made clear to the complainant before the hearing begins, that the person or persons presiding are able to give impartial consideration to the matter at issue, and that each case is processed promptly and expeditiously. The first steps of such procedures should be designed to allow for a settlement of the problem by the persons directly involved. The use of a school staff member serving as an intermediary is suggested for these early steps.

Additionally, the school principal is responsible for distribution of the local school procedures, for planning the necessary implementation with staff,

20. MCPS Regulation 515-2, *Student Withdrawal from Classes (Secondary)*
21. MCPS Regulation 515-1, *Pupil Attendance*
22. MCPS Regulation 550-2, *Protection of Employees, Students & Property*

for assuring that students are informed of their appeal rights, for reviewing and evaluating the procedures at least annually, and for forwarding copies of the local school plan to the area associate superintendent.

The area associate superintendent is responsible for ascertaining that all schools within the area have developed procedures for hearings and appeals.

Appeal of the Decision of the Principal

If a student has attempted, without success, to have a problem resolved at the local school level and is not satisfied with the decision rendered, the student may appeal the decision to the appropriate area associate superintendent and the following steps are carried out:

1. Submitting an Appeal

Within ten school days of the decision of the principal the student may request, in writing, a review of the complaint and appeal the decision to the responsible area associate superintendent. The statement should include:

a. All pertinent factual information

b. The remedy requested

c. A request for:

1) A review of the complaint and the decision of the principal or

2) An informal hearing before the area associate superintendent

2. Review of an Appeal

a. Upon receipt of a request for a review of a decision rendered by the principal, the area associate superintendent acknowledges the receipt of the request and decides whether he/she shall conduct a review or convene an informal hearing.

1) Review of the Principal's Decision

a) The area associate superintendent makes a decision based on the information submitted by the student and any additional information obtained or the area associate superintendent may establish a five-member review board as follows:

- The board should be comprised of two students, two teachers, and one administrator selected at random from an area pool by the administrative assistant for student affairs.
- The five-member board meets within five school days of the date the board is established to review all information and submit recommendations to the area associate superintendent for consideration.
- The area associate superintendent makes a decision based on the recommendations of the board, the information submitted by the student, and any additional information obtained.

b) Within ten school days of the date the appeal is received, the area associate superintendent notifies the student and principal, in writing, of the decision concerning the appeal.

2) Informal Hearing Before the Area Associate Superintendent

a) Upon his or her decision to conduct a hearing, the area associate superintendent does the following:

- Acknowledges receipt of the request
- Sets the date for an informal hearing (note: the hearing must be held within ten school days from the date the request is received)
- Informs all individuals concerned, in writing, of the time, date, and place of the hearing
- Notifies the student of the right to present information, evidence, and witnesses and be represented by an advocate.

b) The area associate superintendent is responsible for the following:

- Conducting the hearing
- Questioning parties to the informal hearing
- Providing an opportunity for the student to question parties to the hearing

c) Within five school days after the informal hearing, the area associate superintendent does the following:

- Reviews all data and information presented at the hearing
- Renders a decision
- Notifies the student and principal, in writing, of the decision and the student's right to appeal the decision

3) Review by the Superintendent (or Designee)

a) The student may appeal the decision of the area associate superintendent. The appeal must be submitted to the superintendent within ten school days of the receipt of the notification of the decision of the area associate superintendent and include information to justify the appeal.

b) The superintendent (or designee: deputy superintendent) reviews the issue and related information.

c) Within five school days of receipt of the appeal, the superintendent or designee renders a decision and notifies the student, principal, and area associate superintendent in writing.

XIV. PATRIOTIC EXERCISES

The principal shall assure that:

- Appropriate opening exercises, including the salute and pledge to the flag, are conducted
- Patriotic exercises are conducted when appropriate preceeding assemblies and other school programs
- Patriotic exercises are positive learning experiences for students
- Staff members involve students in the planning and production of patriotic exercises

No student or staff member shall be compelled to participate in patriotic exercises, nor shall any student be penalized or embarrassed for failure to participate.

No student or staff member shall interfere with the rights of others to participate in patriotic exercises. Such interference constitutes grounds for disciplinary action.

XV. FREEDOM OF RELIGION

School personnel shall assure that:

- Religious exercises are not conducted during school
- Particular religious beliefs are not advocated in any manner in school
- No school-sponsored activity or course is religious in nature
- A student is not prevented from observing his/her religious practices in school unless these violate the rights of others or disrupt school activities

Holiday concerts may include religious music if it meets the standards of MCPS guidelines.[23] Elective seminars on the history or comparative study of religions may be offered and aspects of religion may be discussed when appropriate in courses such as history and literature if presentations are factually objective and do not advocate particular religious viewpoints.

XVI. DISTRIBUTION AND REVIEW OF THIS DOCUMENT

The principal is responsible for distribution of this document within the school and to parents in the school community. *Secondary principals* should distribute the complete document to all students, faculty, and staff in the school at the start of the 1980-81 school year and make it available to students as needed in subsequent years. *Elementary principals* should distribute the document to all faculty and staff and should make the document available to students as determined by each principal to be appropriate to the needs of the school each year. *All principals* should arrange with teachers to discuss the content of this document and the local school plan in appropriate classes and should make the document available to parents through a procedure appropriate to the local school-community setting. (Back-to-School Nights and/or the PTA/PTSA are possible vehicles for establishing this availability, but principals are not limited to these two methods.) It is the principal's responsibility to see that students and faculty members are made aware of any changes in the document as a result of the scheduled reviews and to see that counseling is available to students to assist them in understanding and meeting their rights and responsibilities. Copies of this document should be available in the principal's office, the guidance department, and the school media center and should be made a part of the local school disciplinary plan.

STATEMENT ON DISCIPLINE

Guidelines for Systemwide and Local School Implementation of the Statement on Discipline[24]

The firm, fair, and consistent application of disciplinary policy and action, as called for in the *Statement on Discipline*, requires that (1) certain infractions result in uniform disciplinary action at a given grade level throughout the system, (2) each local school and its community develop and implement a local plan for handling student grievances and discipline as a flexible supplement to the systemwide standards, and (3) all members of the school community be equally aware of the MCPS policies and regulations which involve disciplinary standards. These three requirements are addressed in the following sections:

A. Major Infractions and Countywide Disciplinary Standards

The nature of the following infractions requires consistent action from and direction for all schools. In *secondary schools*, the range of actions would be the one listed under each infraction. In *elementary schools*, the range would be modified so that the required minimum action would be a parent conference with a school administrator. For *special populations*, the range could be modified only if a specific action, mandated under these guidelines,

23. *Guidelines for Selection of Music Relating to Cultural, Ethnic, and Religious Contexts*, December 1972.

24. See also the implementation guidelines under sections XII and XIII of the Student Rights Policy.

were proscribed by a student's individual Educational Management Plan.

For any students who pose a serious disruptive threat or who have been reported to the principal (or designee) for repeated infractions, the principal may initiate proceedings to exceed the maximum penalties listed in these guidelines, as provided for in Regulation 515-3, *Suspension or Expulsion of an MCPS Pupil*, or may seek an alternative placement more appropriate to the individual's educational and social needs.

1. Physical Attack on Staff and Students

An act of physically assaulting a staff member or student on school grounds or in conjunction with school activities would require a minimum action of three days of suspension with police referral. Maximum action, expulsion. (This should be distinguished from a minor fight or scuffle between students which will be addressed in the local school plan.)

2. Verbal Abuse

Willfully intimidating, insulting, or in other manner abusing verbally a member of the school staff would require a minimum action of one day of suspension with a parent conference. Maximum action, five-day suspension. Use of improper language in itself is not here considered as verbal abuse, but such behavior is not condoned and should be dealt with at the school level.

3. Extortion

An act of attempting to secure money or property through threat of physical harm would require a minimum action of one day of suspension with a parent conference. Maximum action, five-day suspension or possible expulsion.

4. Storing, Possessing, or Carrying Dangerous Weapons (MCPS Regulation 230-17)

Unauthorized storing, possessing, or carrying firearms, knives, or any other implement which could be used in a lethal way would require a minimum action of one day of suspension and a parent conference with police referral. Maximum action, expulsion.

5. Destruction of Public Property (Vandalism) (MCPS Regulation 230-3)

In addition to the policy statement on contacting police and full payment, the minimum action for destroying public property would require holding a parent conference and one day of suspension; or the principal may develop a work plan for students on their own time relating to the action in lieu of suspension. Maximum action, five-day suspension.

6. Smoking (MCPS Regulation 540-1)

In addition to the policy statement, minimum action for violations of the policy would be notification to parents and a student conference. Maximum action, three-day suspension.

7. Alcoholic Beverages (MCPS Regulation 230-16)

Minimum action for violation would be a parent conference, police notification, and one day of suspension. Maximum action, expulsion.

8. Drug Abuse (MCPS Regulation 285-10)

Minimum action for a violation would be a parent conference, police notification, and one day of suspension. Maximum action, expulsion.

B. Local School Plan

The *Agreement between Montgomery County Education Association and the Board of Education of Montgomery County*, the Student Rights Policy, and MCPS Regulation 550-1 require that each school adopt a local disciplinary plan, which should include a procedure for handling student grievances and appeals. The local plan would be used in conjunction with this total document and would not generally require repetition of these materials. The school staff, students, and parents should be involved in the development and subsequent review of the local plan. The following guidelines relate to this local school plan:

1. General Considerations

A key guideline in the application of this policy as it relates to the local school plan is that the appropriate reaction to a discipline problem is the least extreme reaction that reasonably holds promise of resolving the problem. Teachers and administrators are encouraged to develop and utilize a variety of informal strategies to maintain effective learning conditions. It should be clearly understood that suspensions and expulsions are penalties of last resort, which should be imposed only after alternate measures have been attempted and have proven unsuccessful in resolving a given problem, or have been considered and are reasonably assumed inappropriate for resolving the problem in question.

2. Structure of Local School Plan

a. Statement of Philosophy

The statement of philosophy should be compatible with MCPS philosophy and may also reflect local school community characteristics.

b. Inclusion of County Policies

A local school plan should contain abstracts of all county policies listed under the discipline policy. The synopses in the appendix of this

document may be sufficient, except in cases where the local school community wishes to include more detailed procedural matters.

c. Specific Disciplinary Infractions

Each school should specify as much as possible infractions and consequences as part of its discipline policy. These infractions should be clearly defined and include the following:

Fighting

Theft

Off school grounds without permission

Class cutting[25]

Truancy

Intimidation

Tardiness

Refusal to identify oneself*

Insubordination

Disruptive classroom behavior

Profanity, obscenity

The above listing is not intended to be exhaustive and may need to be expanded depending on local school considerations consistent with county policy.

d. Corrective Action

Following the county model, each school should provide a range of possible approaches to remediate problem situations; e.g., conference, detention, alternative programs, suspension, etc. Each school shall explicitly define the purposes and use of each action.

e. Development

Schools should include an explanation of the process used to develop the local discipline policy. Article 22 of the Negotiated Agreement stipulates the development of "appropriate disciplinary procedures for each school building with the total involvement of all members of the faculty and administration. Involvement of students and parents will be utilized in the planning and the implementation of such a procedure."

3. Dissemination of Local School Plan

The local school discipline plan must be made available to all students and an opportunity must be provided for discussion and questions at the beginning of the school year. The school should ensure that parents as well as students are aware of the policy on discipline. Each school shall have a standing discipline committee composed of parents, students, and staff that shall meet at least twice each year or as needed to determine the effectiveness of the plan.

By October 1 the area associate superintendent or, in the case of special schools and programs, the associate superintendent for continuum education (or designee) is responsible for monitoring each local school discipline plan and must check to ensure that:

a. The discipline policy established by negotiated agreement is followed in developing school plans.

b. Items a.-e. listed above are followed.

c. The area associate superintendent summary is reported to the deputy superintendent and Department of Educational Accountability. The associate superintendent for continuum education reports on special schools to the Department of Educational Accountability.

Additionally, the associate superintendent for continuum education (or designee) will monitor the deviations specified in the individual Educational Management Plans in relation to the local plan and the *Statement on Discipline*.

C. Countywide Regulations

County regulations related to discipline should be available to and understood by the school staff, students, and parents. These are listed in the appendix.

25. Only where applicable at the elementary school level

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